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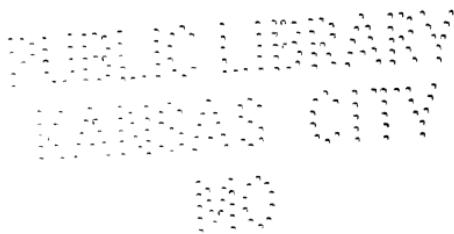
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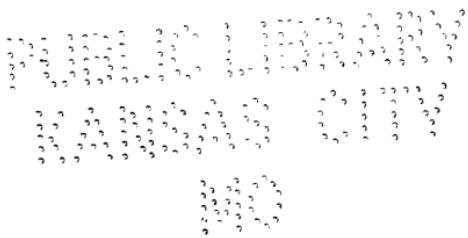


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THE
ROMANCE OF SACRED SONG

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Photo : FRITH, REIGATE.

HENRY F. LYTE.

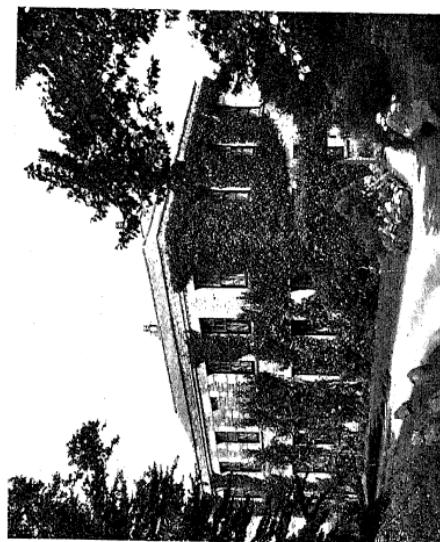


Photo : FRITH, REIGATE.

BERRY HEAD HOUSE.

Where "Abide with me" was written.



By permission.

S. BARING-GOULD.

From portrait by Melton Fisher, R.A.

The
ROMANCE *of*
SACRED SONG

By
DAVID J. BEATTIE
Author of
“Songs of the King’s Highway,”
etc.

MARSHALL, MORGAN & SCOTT, LTD.
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

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TO
MY MOTHER
FROM WHOSE LIPS
I FIRST HEARD
THESE SONGS

PREFACE

MANY years' diligent pursuit along the highways and byways of the realm of Sacred Song produced an accumulation of material, the collecting and tabulating of which was ever a delight and labour of love. To disintegrate, arrange and marshal names, dates and facts presented a formidable task. My bookshelves already groaned under the weight of volumes on this engrossing subject. And yet I was sanguine enough to believe that out of the pile of hymnal notes before me, it was possible to produce something which would not only reach the heart of the hymn lover, but would afford some hours of helpful, and, I trust, pleasurable reading to whoever might peruse these pages. In launching out, therefore, my endeavour has been, in the first place, to interest readers in the authorship and history of the sacred songs they sing.

An attempt has also been made to give an account, not only of the most prominent hymns, but others not so eminent in the realm of hymnody, whose inclusion, because of some special circumstance associated with them, seemed to be desirable. Some hymns which have received prominence may fall far below the standard of first class poetry, and may lay no claim to literary merit, other than that which attaches to hymns which have a well-attested value as having been a channel of blessing in their day and generation. This is my only apology for their inclusion in this volume.

No efforts have been spared in order to verify much hymnal data which came into my hands, and so far as possible I have gone to original sources for the desired information. An intimate acquaintance with many authorities on the other side of the Atlantic has enabled me to set down much fresh material, as well as rendering assistance in the weaving of many little-known

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stories around some of the old songs of the great revival days of a past generation.

My cordial thanks are due to those who so courteously answered my many enquiries, and have assisted in my research in furnishing me with interesting particulars and illustrations. Lastly, special mention should be made of the valuable work of my daughter Elsie, who typed the whole of the manuscript, and to my friend Mr. J. Duckworth, B.A., who so ably assisted in the correction of proofs.

D. J. B.

Carlisle, 1931.

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CHAPTER I.

Early Days of Sacred Song

IN these days, when the hymn book plays so important a part in every place of worship, stories of hymns and their writers is a subject of perennial interest. Nor is it difficult to understand how the memory retains the words and tunes of hymns which were learned at a mother's knee or at the Sunday School. Who is there amongst us who has not at some time or other experienced the strange and subtle influence of sacred song, an influence which compelled the tears to come unbidden ; burning tears of joy, sorrow, remorse or peace that come with the strain of some old and almost forgotten hymn ? If by reason of some disappointment the heart aches ; if it yearns " for the touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is still " ; if it throbs at the fancied foot-step that comes no more, what can soothe and comfort like " Jesus, Lover of my soul " ?

How often as we travel on the journey of life are we suddenly arrested by the strains of some familiar hymn wafted to us, recalling memories of the days of long ago, and portraying on one's vision some sacred scene from which many of the actors have passed away.

To many of us, hymns have proved a never-failing solace, an oasis in a parched and thirsty land, a drink from the trough on a dry and dusty day. In the storm and stress of life's battle, the echo of their sweet refrain has renewed our strength and dispelled our fears.

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Around the hymn and hymn-tune who can tell how many cherished associations gather from the earliest days? And though few seek to know the origin or history of the hymns that please them, the telling of the tale never fails to add to their attraction.

There is a fascinating power in the singing of a hymn which can do God's work in a soul when every other instrumentality has failed. There was not always so much freedom in this respect in the days of our grandfathers. The opposition to hymn singing was widespread throughout Scotland, and Sankey tells how, when he commenced singing a solo in the Free Assembly Hall, Edinburgh, during the great mission there in 1873, a woman's shrill voice was heard in the gallery, as she made her way toward the door, crying: "Let me oot! Let me oot! What would John Knox say to the like o' yon?"

In his delightfully written life story, where he relates his varied experience during his first campaign amongst the good Scottish folks, Sankey does not hide the fact that he was not a little perturbed regarding the question of solo singing, as its propriety and usefulness was not yet fully understood or admitted. As he took his seat at the instrument at one of the first meetings held in Edinburgh, Sankey discovered to his surprise that Dr. Horatius Bonar was seated close by the organ, right in front of the pulpit. "Of all men in Scotland," says Sankey, "he was the one man concerning whose decision I was most solicitous. He was, indeed, my ideal hymn-writer, the prince among hymnists of his day and generation. And yet he would not sing one of his own beautiful hymns in his own congregation, such as 'I heard the voice of Jesus say,' or 'I was a wandering sheep,' because he ministered to a church that believed in the singing of Psalms only. With fear and trembling, therefore, I announced as a

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solo the hymn 'Free from the law, O happy condition.' " No prayer having been offered for this part of the service, and fearful lest the singing might prove only an entertainment, instead of spiritual blessing, Sankey requested that the whole congregation should join him in a word of prayer asking God's blessing on the truth about to be sung. It was a time of tense solemnity, but the anxiety of the moment was relieved, and believing and rejoicing in the glorious truth contained in the hymn, he sang it through to the end, amid a reverent silence never before experienced.

At the close of Mr. Moody's address, Dr. Bonar turned toward the American singer with a smile on his venerable face, and reaching out his hand, he said: "Well, Mr. Sankey, you sang the Gospel to-night." Thus the way was wonderfully opened up for the mission of sacred song in Scotland, a particular sphere of ministry in which so much has been accomplished since that memorable hour.

With the introduction of hymns for general congregational use, the worthy precentor with his pitch-pipe and tuning fork was obliged to relinquish his position of importance and dignity, to give place to the organ—or what our good Scottish parents used satirically to refer to as the "kist o' whistles." A story is told of the precentor of a certain Scottish kirk, who had purchased a new pitch-pipe, but when the time came for leading the praise, he was unable to bring the instrument into action. He tugged at it—thrust it in—tried to pull it out—gave it a thump—grinned and pulled again—but budge it would not. The minister grew impatient, and leaning over the pulpit, whispered to the precentor, "Stop, Jonathan"; then aloud to the congregation, he said, "Let us pray." By this time the unfortunate precentor had become exasperated, and still struggling with the obstinate instrument,

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cried out, “ Pray, did ye say ? We’ll pray nane till I get this thing tae work ! ”

But while we rejoice at the revival of this God-sent ministry of sacred song, so strikingly evinced in the past generation and during the present—a channel which has brought in its train countless blessings—we are reminded that, in the same way, under similar circumstances, God mightily used the power of sacred song in days of old, with no less wonderful results.

Away back in the sixteenth century, Martin Luther, the author of many choice hymns which have been sung down through the centuries, well understood this method of propagating the truth, and employed it with a skilful hand. His own poetical talents and love of music were very great, and when, as a wandering minstrel, he earned his daily bread by exercising his musical powers in singing before the doors of the rich in the streets of Magdeburg and Eisenach, he was as truly preparing for the future reformer as when, a retired monk in the cloister of Erfurt, he was storing his mind with the truths of revelation, with which to refute the errors of popery. A few sentences from a preface which Luther wrote to a collection of his own hymns, published in 1524, all of which were set to music in four parts, is worthy of note. He tells us that this had been done, “ for no other reason than because of my desire that the young, who ought to be educated in music as well as in other good arts, might have something to take the place of worldly and amorous songs, and so learn something useful and practise something virtuous, as becometh the young. I would be glad to see all arts, and especially music, employed in the service of Him who created them. ”

How God signally used this converted monk is familiar history. “ The whole people, ” wrote a Romanist of that day, “ is singing itself into this Lutheran

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doctrine." It is said that Luther accomplished more in setting all Germany singing, than he did with his preaching. The Church of Rome became alarmed, for they well knew that the pure Gospel would be sung unto many who could never have been prevailed upon to hear it any other way.

As we have seen, the Reformation movement in Germany was marked by a great outburst of hymnody. In Britain, however, Protestantism found its vehicle of praise in the metrical version of the Psalms. This was due, no doubt, to the influence of Calvin and the Genevan school, who held as a principle that the Word of God should have supreme dominion in public worship, and that no production of man should be allowed to take its place.

The prejudice against the use of hymns in favour of the Psalms, especially amongst the staid Scottish folk, remained with many of the older people till the end of their days. In proof of this, the following incident, which came under my personal observation, will, no doubt, amply suffice. Old Betsy lay dying, and was visited by her friend Malcolm Ferguson, a local evangelist. After spending a time with the aged saint, whom he sought to comfort and encourage, he enquired whether she would like him to sing a hymn. "Na, na," was the quick reply, "nane o' yer human hymns for me. What's wrang wi' the Psalms o' Dauvit? I expect, Malcolm, when ye get to heaven, ye'll gang clankin' straight for Sankey; but Dauvit's my man."

Early English hymns are not numerous, and such as exist were written for private edification rather than for public use.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748) has been rightly looked upon as the father of English hymnody. Thirty-seven years before the birth of Watts, Thomas Ken was born.

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A remarkable coincidence is that Watts lived as long after Ken died in 1711, as Ken had preceded him in beginning life. Bishop Ken will always be remembered for his immortal lines in the form of our most used doxology :

“ Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him all creatures here below,
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”

—which, doubtless, has been repeatedly sung by more people than the words of any other writer. In addition to his doxology and other works, Ken has given us two matchless hymns for which they are designed—one for a morning hymn, and the other for an evening hymn—“ Awake my soul,” and “ Glory to Thee, my God, this night.” But pioneers are not always perfect in their methods. Sculptors finish the work begun by the men far away in the quarries, who split up the rocks on the mountain side. Ken perceived the need of a new hymnology, and pointed to the way in which Watts and Wesley in later years walked.

Previous to the coming of Moody and Sankey to Britain, the early nineteenth century gave unmistakable evidence of a new birth in the field of hymnody. People were really beginning to take an interest in the subject, and it was evident that hymns were becoming an indispensable part of every form of religious services. Accordingly we find a host of writers pouring forth hymns. Their merit, of course, varied greatly. Here and there we find a writer with a really poetical mind, whose soul breathings have powerfully enriched our hymnology. There were also many others who had been inspired to pen some very beautiful hymns ; but there were also many hymns, which, from a literary and theological standpoint could not be placed on a

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very high plane. Still, at that period, it was early to discriminate ; nobody could say which of these would survive and which would not ; only time could reveal that.

In taking a glance at our hymns from a more general point of view, the first thing that strikes the observer is how extraordinarily cosmopolitan compilers of hymn books had been in the sources from which they had drawn their supplies. And here attention should be drawn to the debt we owe to the undefatigable zeal of translators. The Oxford movement of 1833, led men to investigate the old Greek and Latin hymns, and naturally, they went on to translate them. The prince of these translators was J. M. Neale, and perhaps the finest work which he did was the translation of the Rhythm of Bernard of Morlaix, and from which modern hymn collectors had extracted among others the old favourite "Jerusalem the Golden." Besides this, Latin hymnody has furnished us with : "O come all ye faithful," "O come, O come, Immanuel," "Ye choirs of New Jerusalem," and a host of others. "Hail gladdening light," "O happy band of pilgrims," and "Art thou weary ?" are Greek ; "Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah," is Welsh, "Through the night of doubt and sorrow," is Danish ; and "Glory be to Jesus," Italian.

And we must not forget what we owe to America who gave to us our popular Gospel song. Indeed, it is remarkable how many nations have joined together to make up the verses which to-day are sung in church and chapel, mission hall and cottage meeting, as well as at tent and open-air services.

An outstanding feature in the realm of hymnody which cannot escape observation is that public favour has been phenomenally capricious with regard to its taste in hymns. Nobody could say how or why one

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hymn became part of a national collection, while others fell flat. Kirke White was immortalised by "Oft in danger," Harriet Auber by "Our blest Redeemer," Sarah Adams by "Nearer my God to Thee," Edward Perronet by "All hail the power of Jesus' name," but there are few who know anything else that any of them ever wrote. Every one is familiar with "Rock of Ages," but though a few other hymns by Toplady were sometimes reprinted, nobody cared for them.

Then in regard to what may be termed our famous hymns, it is worthy of note that these are not the privilege of any one particular religious body, but are, in the best sense of the word, the common property of nearly all English speaking Christians. To meet their own particular requirements, each religious body has its own hymn book, and, of course, each hymn book has its own peculiar hymns. It has been said that Ridley and Latimer, who quarrelled about vestments, agreed at the stake. We live in happier times, where Christians who differ in more important matters can still agree in their hymns of prayer and their songs of praise. The productions of Ken and Heber, of Wesley and Toplady, of Doddridge and Kelly, of Cowper and Newton, of Fanny Crosby and Frances Ridley Havergal, all these harmoniously combine, for singing in company we at once forget the non-essentials on which we may differ, and remember only the desire for holiness, the enthusiasm for righteousness, the thankfulness for free unmerited favour, and the love for our blessed Lord in which we all agree.

No other literary composition is like a hymn. It is not a mere poetic impulse. It is not a thought, a passing fancy, or a feeling threaded upon words. It is the voice speaking from the soul a few words that often represent a whole life. Hymns and spiritual songs have indeed wielded a powerful influence in almost every

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walk of life, at one period or another, through countless ages.

All history carries the echo of music. At an early period Jubal became a manufacturer of musical instruments, and thus the first instruments mentioned in the Bible are the harp and organ (Gen. 4-21). Before his day, doubtless, many an ingenious amateur picked tones from a string or made the requisite vibrations in tubes of resonant bodies. The toph or tambourine—known to the Egyptians and Assyrians—was used by Miriam and Jephthah's daughter.

“Not only is inanimate nature full of music,” says an eminent writer, “but God has wonderfully organised the human voice, so that in the plainest throat and lungs there are fourteen direct muscles which can make over sixteen thousand different sounds. Now, there are thirty indirect muscles which can make, it has been estimated, more than one hundred and seventy-three millions of sounds. Now, I say, when God has so constructed the human voice, and when He has filled the whole earth with harmony, and when He recognised it in the ancient temple, I have a right to come to the conclusion that God loves music.”

Thus, turning back the pages of history, we learn that Miriam led the hosts in a hymn of praise on the farther banks of the Red Sea. Moses closed his far-reaching career with a great song. Deborah celebrated the victory over Israel's enemies in a hymn of thanksgiving. Jehoshaphat when called upon to meet a vast multitude of enemies, which threatened to overrun his entire kingdom, placed singers in front of his army to lead the march, singing the praises of Israel's God.

“There has been much discussion as to where music was born,” once said the late Dr. Talmage. “I think that at the beginning, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy,

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the earth heard the echo. The cloud on which the angels stood to celebrate the creation was the birth-place of song. The stars that glitter at night are only so many keys of celestial pearl on which God's fingers play the music of the spheres. Inanimate nature is full of God's stringed and wind instruments. Silence itself—perfect silence—is only a musical rest in God's great anthem of worship. Wind among the leaves, insect humming in the summer air, the rush of billows upon the beach, the ocean far out sounding its everlasting psalm, the quail whistling up from the grass, are music."

David, the sweet singer of Israel, with his psalm and harp, is the poet and musician of the Bible, and surely nothing in the whole record of history can be found to compare with the majesty and magnificence of these heavenly songs which are still singing their way through the world.

The angel choir celebrated the birth of the Infant Saviour, to the astonished shepherds on Bethlehem's plain. It was while Paul and Silas, lacerated and wounded by the cruel scourging which they had received, sang praises to God at midnight, that the Philippian jail was rent asunder, and the jailor and all his household were converted that night. The use of "psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs," was enjoined upon the churches at Colosse and Ephesus. Many evidences are furnished us, too, that in private, as well as in public, the first Christians were warmly attached to singing the praise of God. All through the Scripture we are commanded to sing unto the Lord, to praise Him with the harp, trumpet, and organ; and to speak in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs. Finally, the Book closes with the pearly gates of heaven left ajar, through which there floats out upon us the voice of harpers, harping with their harps and singing the new song of Moses and the Lamb.

CHAPTER II.

Pioneers of English Hymnody

ISAAC WATTS, the author of the immortal hymn, “O God, our help in ages past,” is rightly regarded as the father of English hymnody, for, prior to his time, hymns were rarely sung in public worship. Up to that period practically the only vehicle of praise in the English and Scottish churches took the form of very crude versions of the Psalms, while in some non-conformist congregations there was no singing at all. A story is told of young Watts, on coming home from chapel one Sunday, complaining to his father, who was one of the deacons, that the psalmody in use at the Congregational Chapel at Southampton did not possess the dignity and beauty becoming a Christian service.

“Then give us something better, young man!” was his father’s ironical reply.

Isaac determined to do so, and the following Sunday arrived at the chapel with his first hymn: a hymn eminently appropriate, and which to-day, after the passing of two centuries and more, has lost none of its power and beauty :

“Behold the glories of the Lamb
Amidst His Father’s throne;
Prepare new honours for His Name,
And songs before unknown.”

The youthful hymn writer’s initial attempt was so favourably received that he was requested to provide another for the next Sunday. A chord had been

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struck which gave birth to new and delightful harmonies in English hymnody. Thus, bringing a fresh hymn to the chapel each Sunday, until almost a volume was produced, began the reputation as a hymnist of the famous Dr. Watts. He was the eldest of nine children, and was born on July 17th, 1674, at Southampton, where his father kept a flourishing boarding-school. Isaac Watts, senior, lived through the stormy days of early nonconformity, and because of his religious convictions was twice thrown into prison. While there, the infant Isaac was often brought to the outside of the prison by his mother, who would sit for hours on the stone by the gate. As he grew into boyhood Isaac did not enjoy robust health, and being of a studious nature he was apt at times to overtax his strength. On his twenty-fourth birthday Watts preached his first sermon, and two years later was appointed assistant minister of the famous Mark Lane Independent Church, London, subsequently becoming sole pastor. Ill-health, however, compelled him to give up all regular pastoral duties, and on the invitation of Sir Thomas and Lady Abney he went for a week's visit to their residence in Hertfordshire—a visit which resulted in a stay of thirty years. It was during this happy period of Isaac Watts' life that most of his hymns were written. He died on November 25th, 1748, aged seventy-five, and was buried in the Puritan resting-place at Bunhill Fields. Later, a monument was erected to his memory in Westminster Abbey, near to that of John and Charles Wesley.

Altogether, Watts wrote over six hundred hymns, in the composition of which, there was ever present an ardent desire to express in simple yet forceful language, the aspirations of the heart towards God. "I make no pretence to be a poet," he says, "but to the Lamb that was slain, and now lives, I have

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addressed many a song, to be sung by the penitent and believing heart."

Sweetest amongst his compositions, and pronounced by critics as the finest in the English language, is the universally loved hymn, "When I survey the wondrous cross." Here Watts strikes his highest note as he dwells in tender and solemn reverence on the all-absorbing theme of God's wonderful redemption. Where, in the whole range of hymnody, could be found a verse to compare with the following lines?

" See ! from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down ;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown ? "

A missionary hymn which vies in popularity with that of Bishop Heber, is Watts'—

" Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run."

It is said that the majestic tune to which "O God, our help in ages past" is sung the world over, known as "St. Anne," was composed so far back as 1687; more than a generation before the hymn was written. Thus, it is quite probable that the hymn was sung to the same old tune in the days when Isaac Watts himself joined in the singing.

Other compositions of his, which have stood the test of more than two hundred years, are, "I'm not ashamed to own my Lord," "Not all the blood of beasts," "Come let us join our cheerful songs," and "There is a land of pure delight." The latter hymn, it is said, was suggested to Watts as he sat at his parlour window at Southampton, and looked out upon the waters of the Itchen, with the Isle of Wight in the distance, and the beautiful landscape stretching far away on the other side of the river. Thoughts of

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Canaan, and the Jordan, and the glories of the eternal home beyond, illumed the spiritual vision of the great hymnist, as from his heart poured forth the words :

“ There everlasting spring abides,
And never-with’ring flowers ;
Death, like a narrow sea, divides
This heavenly land from ours.”

It is related that, when slighted by the maiden of his choice, who, in repulsing his addresses, told the young minister that although she admired the jewel she could not endure the casket, Watts had some consolation in giving expression to his injured feelings in a hymn commencing :

“ How vain are all things here below,
How false and yet how fair !
Each pleasure hath its poison too,
And every sweet a snare.”

Watts was never married, and yet he is a child’s hymnist. Though present day hymnals contain few of his old-time compositions, still, around these simple stanzas, which, two or three generations ago never failed to sway the feelings of the child, there clings a halo of happy memories, drawing us nearer, and still nearer, to the One of Whom these little hymns taught us to sing.

When Dr. Watts was thirty years old, there was born in London on June 26th, 1702, Philip Doddridge, the author of the stirring Advent hymn :

“ Hark, the glad sound ! the Saviour comes,
The Saviour promised long ;
Let every heart exult with joy,
And every voice be song.”

In later years, despite the disparity in age, the two became staunch friends, and throughout life they continued to live in close brotherly fellowship with each

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other. Both were Independent ministers and writers of sacred song. Doddridge, however, through enfeebled health, survived his more illustrious compeer by three years only. Philip was the twentieth child of his parents, and after passing through the vicissitudes of a childhood which bereft him of both father and mother, he survived, and grew into a youth of high promise.

Before Doddridge was quite out of his teens he took to preaching, and the Duchess of Bedford, recognising his sterling qualities as a preacher of the Word, offered to send him to the university, and provide a living in the Church of England at her own charges. Doddridge, however, like his friend Watts, declined the offer, and instead, qualified himself for service as a dissenting minister. After seven years' pastorate at the quiet little village of Kibworth, where he had received part of his education, Doddridge settled at Northampton as minister of an Independent Church. In addition to his pastoral work, he opened an academy for the purpose of training young men for the ministry.

He was a man of outstanding literary talent; one of his best known prose works being *The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*. In the production of this book, Doddridge was greatly encouraged and assisted by Watts, whose declining strength did not permit the good doctor to carry into effect his own design. It is interesting to note that it was through the reading of this book that brought about a great spiritual change in the life of William Wilberforce, the benefactor of slaves, and prompted him to write his *Practical View of Christianity*, which, it is said, moulded the life of that illustrious Scotsman, Dr. Chalmers.

It is chiefly as a hymn writer that the name of Philip Doddridge will be remembered, for, as such he occupies a premier place. His hymns number about four hundred, and, singular though it may seem, they

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did not pass beyond the stage of manuscript during the author's lifetime. They were first issued in sheet form in the author's own handwriting, and were passed about and read. In this way many of Dr. Doddridge's manuscripts have come to be preserved, not a few of which still show the writing to be fresh and clear, after the passing of more than a hundred and fifty years.

Among the hymns which have attained the greatest popularity, are, "Grace, 'tis a charming sound," "O God of Bethel, by whose hand," "My God, and is Thy table spread?" and that sweetest of all hymns of the child of God, who, in the ecstasy of a joy-filled heart finds fullest expression in the glowing words :

"O happy day, that fixed my choice
On Thee, my Saviour and my God !
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell his raptures all abroad."

The hymn, "O God of Bethel, by whose hand," was written to follow a sermon on "Jacob's Vow," (Gen. xxviii. 20-22) preached January 16th, 1737, and is numbered among the Scottish Psalms and Paraphrases. There is a pathetic interest attached to these verses, from their association with the story of the heroic missionary, Dr. Livingstone. From early boyhood his heart had been tuned to the Psalms and Paraphrases, beloved by Scots people the world over, and it is said that this one, which had fixed itself on his memory, became the favourite hymn of his wanderings in darkest Africa. And when on April 18th, 1874, his remains were borne to their last resting-place in Westminster Abbey, it was to the plaintive strains of this hymn :

"O God of Bethel, by whose hand
Thy people still are fed,
Who through this weary pilgrimage
Hast all our fathers led."

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Perhaps the most unpopular hymn that Dr. Doddridge ever wrote was one for early rising. "The very object for which the good doctor wrote," says a contemporary writer, "proved the death blow to the composition, for if there is one thing more than another to which members of the human race strongly object, it is leaving their beds in the small hours. Dr. Doddridge was not aware of this, and, in order that the hymn should not be entirely wasted, sang it himself. At five o'clock," so the story goes, "he prepared to leave his bed, repeating five stanzas before doing so ; at the sixth he rose and dressed." The writer is careful not to tell us how long the worthy doctor lingered over the first five verses !

Consumption, brought on by overwork, compelled Dr. Doddridge to leave England for a milder climate, and he sailed for Lisbon, where he died two weeks after his arrival, on October 26th, 1751, in his fiftieth year.

On the wall behind the pulpit of the church of St. Mary Woolnoth, London, may be seen a simple tablet bearing this inscription :

JOHN NEWTON
clerk,
once an infidel and libertine,
a servant of slaves in Africa ;
was
by the rich mercy of our Lord and Saviour
Jesus Christ,
preserved, restored, pardoned,
and appointed to preach the faith
he had long laboured to destroy.
Near sixteen years at Olney in Bucks,
and twenty-seven years in this church.

One of the most remarkable men, whose name pos-

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terity has lovingly inscribed on the honoured roll of early English hymn writers is John Newton, author of the sublime hymn, "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds," and whose hand penned his own epitaph. He was born in London in the year 1725, the only child of his parents. His mother, a pious dissenter, was a godly praying woman, and stored his childish mind with Scripture, but died when the boy was only seven years old. At the age of eleven, his father, a captain in the Merchant Service, took his son to sea with him. John's life at sea teems with thrilling escapades and reckless profligacy. Seeking the company of evil companions he grew into an abandoned and godless sailor, and the glimmering rays of the religious thoughts of boyhood changed into fixed infidelity. Seized by the press-gang, he was forced into the Royal Navy, from which he soon afterwards deserted. On being recaptured he was flogged, and later dismissed for insubordination. Newton again took to sea, sailing under the flag of a West African slaver, from which he was expelled on account of his wicked conduct, and for fifteen months lived half starved in degradation under a cruel slave dealer. Returning to England, the ship in which he sailed encountered a terrific storm. It was while taking his turn with the shipmates at the pumps, when hope was all but abandoned, that John Newton reached the turning point of his career. In the face of apparent death he cried aloud to God for mercy. His past life came before him like an ominous cloud and the profligate sailor was filled with deep remorse. The ship was saved, but ere it reached harbour the light of the glorious Gospel shone in upon the benighted soul of John Newton. He was then just twenty-three. In 1755, Newton abandoned his seafaring life, and coming under the influence of such men as Wesley and Whitefield he had his thoughts directed to the ministry. His spare time

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was now taken up reading theological books, the study of God's Word, and the preaching of the Gospel. At the age of thirty-nine he was licensed to the curacy of Olney, in Buckinghamshire, and it was here he opened up a life-long friendship with William Cowper, the poet. Together they composed the well-known Olney Hymns, published in 1779, of which collection sixty-eight were composed by Cowper, and two hundred and eighty by Newton. Some of John Newton's best known hymns are : "Begone unbelief, my Saviour is near," "Glorious things of Thee are spoken," "In evil long I took delight," "Rejoice, believer in the Lord," and "May the grace of Christ our Saviour."

The composition, however, by which his name will always be remembered is the hymn beginning :

" How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear !
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear."

Newton lived to the ripe age of eighty-two and died in the city of his birth. He was buried in St. Mary, Woolnoth, but owing to the construction of an underground railway station in the vicinity, the church was closed from 1891 to 1893 in order that the vaults might be cleared. The bodies were re-interred at Ilford, but the remains of John Newton and his wife were taken to Olney and buried in the south-east corner of the church-yard, where a monument was erected at a later date. A grim relic of the removal is to be seen in the discoloured brass plate, formerly on Newton's coffin, which is hung up under a glass on the west wall of Olney church.

Following in the wake of Watts, Doddridge and Newton, came the poet Montgomery, who gave to the world, "For ever with the Lord," and whose name as a

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hymn writer ranks in the very forefront. The son of a Moravian minister of Irish descent, James Montgomery was born on November 4th, 1771, at Irvine in Ayrshire, the land made famous as the native place of Robert Burns. His father was anxious that James, his eldest son, should follow in his footsteps, and sent the boy to a Moravian school in Yorkshire to pursue his studies. Soon afterwards, the parents sailed as missionaries to the West Indies, where they died, leaving their son to fight life's battles single handed. Left to his own resources, it was not long before young Montgomery, tiring of the restraint of school life, and feeling his utter unfitness for ministerial duties, abandoned all thought of fulfilling the purpose of his father. Escaping from school he set out in search of work, and obtained employment in a retail shop at Mirfield, near Wakefield. This change, however, did not exactly suit his youthful taste, and he sought other employment, which he found in the shop of a draper at Wath-upon-Dearne. All this time James was busy writing verses, and before he had reached his eighteenth birthday he had collected quite a considerable number of poems. Fired with ambition, he made a journey to London with the hope of finding a publisher for his youthful poems, but this ended in failure, and he returned to Sheffield, where he secured employment in the office of the *Sheffield Register* newspaper. Montgomery eventually became proprietor, changed its name to *Iris*, and successfully conducted it for thirty years. As a journalist, his principles in days when party feeling ran high, were evidently too liberal for the Government's ideas, and Montgomery was twice imprisoned, once for publishing a poem—not his own—on “the Fall of the Bastille.” It was when Montgomery lay in prison that many of his best hymns were written. To its credit be it said that the Govern-

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ment, by way, perhaps, of atonement, in after years conferred on the poet a well-deserved pension of £200 a year. Recognized as a poet of high water mark, Montgomery's poems brought him considerable popularity, and called forth the admiration of such critics as the celebrated Lord Byron.

Montgomery was once asked, "Which of your poems will live?" to which he replied, "None, sir, except a few of my hymns." He spoke truly. It is by his hymns that Montgomery is remembered, rather than by his more ambitious poetry. Thus, while his *Wanderer of Switzerland* and *The World before the Flood*, which brought him fame as a poet, are unknown to-day, such hymns as "For ever with the Lord," "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire," "Hail to the Lord's anointed," and that sweetest of all communion hymns :

"According to Thy gracious word,
In meek humility,
This will I do, my dying Lord,
I will remember Thee,"

will never be forgotten. He wrote about four hundred hymns, a considerable number of which are in present use. Dr. Julian, the eminent hymnologist, has this to say of Montgomery : "The secrets of his power as a writer of hymns were manifold. His poetic genius was of a high order, higher than most who stand with him in the front ranks of Christian poets. His ear for rhythm was exceedingly accurate and refined. His knowledge of Holy Scripture was most extensive. His religious views were broad and charitable. His devotional spirit was of the holiest type. With the faith of a strong man he united the beauty and simplicity of a child. Richly poetic without exuberance, dogmatic without uncharitableness, tender without sentimentality, elaborate without diffusiveness, richly

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musical without apparent effort, he has bequeathed to the Church of Christ wealth which could only have come from a true genius and a sanctified heart."

James Montgomery passed away in his sleep at The Mount, Sheffield, on April 30th, 1854, and was honoured with a public funeral. Later, a statue to his memory was erected over his grave.

The name of John Keble will always be remembered by his monumental work the *Christian Year*, a collection of poems and sacred songs for the year, published in 1827, which reached its ninety-sixth edition during the lifetime of the author. It is from this poetical storehouse that English hymnody has been enriched by the inclusion in its ever increasing volumes, of that gem of evening hymns :

" Sun of my soul, Thou Saviour dear,
It is not night if Thou be near ;
O may no earthborn cloud arise
To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes."

John Keble was the son of a clergyman, and was born at Fairford, in Gloucestershire, in 1792. He received his early tuition at home under the scholarly guidance of his father, and at the age of fifteen he went to Oxford where the future hymn writer had a brilliant career. At the age of eighteen he took double first honours, which was then counted a rare distinction, and had the honour of being appointed Professor of Poetry. Naturally shy and unambitious, Keble never felt quite at home at Oxford, although it was there he met many of his life-long friends, including Dr. Arnold, who later became the distinguished Rugby master, Lord Coleridge and John Henry Newman.

In 1835, Keble became Vicar of Hursley, a scattered parish six miles from Winchester, with a population of fifteen thousand people. Here for thirty years, amid

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the peaceful surrounding of a country village, he made his home till his death in 1866, his devoted wife following him six weeks later.

The greater part of Keble's life was taken up, in conjunction with such men as Newman and Faber, in religious controversies about church matters known as "Tractarian movement," and when, eventually, his friend Newman seceded to Rome, though he feared the step was coming, Keble received the news with profound grief. It is, however, as a hymn writer and Christian poet that we have to deal with Keble in these pages. During his incumbency, the villagers had come to know and love their shy and unassuming vicar, for, though much of his time was occupied in writing, he was a constant visitor amongst his flock, ministering to their various needs. Hursley church was restored by him, the necessary funds being drawn from the money received through the sale of the *Christian Year*.

The recognized tune to "Sun of my Soul," Keble's most famous hymn, is the one by Sir Herbert Oakeley, known as *Abends*. It is a delightfully sweet and appropriate melody, and though it had many predecessors, *Abends* very soon sprang into favour.

Among other hymns by John Keble to be found in present day hymnals are: "The voice that breathed o'er Eden," a hymn much used at marriage celebrations, "There is a Book, who runs may read," "When God of old came down from heaven," "Lord, in Thy name Thy servants plead," and that glorious morning hymn:

" New every morning is Thy love,
Our wakening and uprising prove ;
Through sleep and darkness safely brought,
Restored to life, and power, and thought."

Contemporaneous with Keble, and rightly recognized as the Prince of Translators, John Mason Neale

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has done more in the realm of hymnology than any other exponent in this particular field of literature. A son of the Church—his father was the Rev. Cornelius Neale, a man of considerable learning—he was born in London on January 24th, 1818. His father died when the boy was five years old, thus his early training was almost entirely under the tender care of his mother, of whom in after years he wrote, “a mother to whom I owe more than I can express.” From his youth Neale had a passion for books, and it is said that he read when he sat at meals, read while he walked in the busy streets or the quiet country lanes, read when out driving, read everything that came his way, and what he read was ineffaceably registered on his mind, for he never seemed to forget what he read.

Neale had a distinguished career at Cambridge, where he was considered the best man of his year. Archbishop Trench called him “the most profoundly learned hymnologist of our church”; another “one of the most erudite scholars, one of the best linguists (he knew twenty languages), one of the most profound theologians, and foremost liturgists of his time.” In 1842 he was appointed incumbent of Crawley, in Sussex, but owing to ill-health he was compelled to retire from ministerial duties and leave England for Madeira, where he spent about a year. On returning in 1846, Dr. Neale was presented to the wardenship of Sackville College, East Grinstead, where the wardens salary averaged the munificent sum of £27 a year! This post he held till his death, August 6th, 1866. Dr. Neale was a voluminous writer, both in prose and verse, and as he struggled with poverty, his stories for children were written to furnish him with the means of livelihood.

Among hymns from Greek and Latin sources which we owe to Neale, the following are familiar : “O happy

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band of pilgrims," "The day is past and over," "Jerusalem the golden," "Brief life is here our portion," and "All glory, laud and honour."

An incident, illustrating in an amusing way his extraordinary mastery of Latin, is worthy of relating here. It was during a visit to his friend John Keble, at Hursley, and is told by the Rev. Gerald Moultrie. "Mr. Keble, having to go to another room to find some papers was detained a short time. On his return, Dr. Neale said, 'Why, Keble, I thought you told me that the *Christian Year* was entirely original.' 'Yes,' he answered, 'it certainly is.' 'Then how comes this?' and Dr. Neale placed before him the Latin of one of Keble's hymns. Keble professed himself utterly confounded. He protested that he had never seen this 'original,' no, not in all his life. After a few minutes Neale relieved him by owning that he had just turned it into Latin in his absence."

Though the name of John Mason Neale is best known as a translator, he was also an original composer, and many of his hymns find a place not only in our own hymnals, but also in those of other nations. A hymn of surpassing beauty which should really be classed with his original compositions rather than a translation, is :

" Art thou weary, art thou languid,
 Art thou sore distressed?
 ' Come to Me,' saith One, ' and coming,
 Be at rest.' "

In his day, John Ellerton, who wrote "The day Thou gavest, Lord, is ended," and many other equally familiar hymns, was termed by Matthew Arnold as "The greatest of living hymnologists." He certainly occupies a pre-eminent place in the foremost rank of hymn writers. Throughout life hymns were his joy

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and delight. He compiled many hymnals and rendered valuable service to hymnology generally. But he is best known for his own compositions, many of which will live while the world continues to lift her voice in sacred song.

John Ellerton was born in London, on December 16th, 1826. After graduating at Cambridge and holding several appointments, he became, in 1886, Rector of White Roding. He was appointed Hon. Canon of St. Albans in 1892, and died on June 15th of the following year. "The subject of Mr. Ellerton's hymns," says Julian, "and the circumstances under which they were written, had much to do with the concentration of thought and terseness of expression by which they are characterised. The words which he uses are usually short and simple; the thought is clear and well stated; the rhythm is good and stately. Ordinary facts in sacred history and in daily life are lifted above commonplace rhymes with which they are usually associated. . . His sympathy with nature, especially in her sadder moods, is great; he loves the fading light and the peace of eve, and lingers in the shadows. Unlike many writers who set forth their illustrations in detail, and then tie to them the moral which they are to teach, he weaves his moral into the metaphor, and pleases the imagination and refreshes the spirit together."

Canon Ellerton's best known hymn is :

"Saviour, again to Thy dear name we raise
With one accord our parting hymn of praise;
We stand to bless Thee ere our worship cease,
Then, lowly kneeling, wait Thy word of peace."

which is sung perhaps as frequently as the evening hymns of Lyte and Keble. It was written in 1886. Not unlike many other writers, Ellerton frequently

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composed his hymns to some particular melody which happened to take his fancy. In this way a number of his best known hymns were written. When he was asked to write this hymn for a special occasion, he used a tune entitled "St. Agnes," and taking the reverse side of an old sermon note he drafted out his now famous hymn. The original manuscript, which is still preserved, is interesting from the point of view of its many corrections by the author. For some years the hymn was sung to the same old melody, but a more beautiful and appropriate tune, to which it has since been sung, was later composed by Dr. Dykes.

Canon Ellerton did not take out a copyright of any of his hymns, believing that "if counted worthy to contribute to Christ's praise in the congregation, one ought to feel very thankful and very humble."

He wrote a large number of hymns, of which the following are of real merit: "Throned upon the awful tree," "Our day of praise is done," "This is the day of life," "Now the labourer's task is o'er." The last named strikes a singularly sympathetic note, as do most of his hymns, and has become the funeral hymn of our nation:

" 'Earth to earth, and dust to dust,'
Calmly now the words we say;
Left behind we wait in trust
For the resurrection day.
Father, in Thy gracious keeping
Leave we now Thy servant sleeping."

No book on the fascinating subject of hymnology would be complete without fitting allusion to Dr. Julian, the greatest authority on hymns and hymn writers this country has ever known. He is well known throughout the English-speaking world, and by literary scholars in all Christian countries, as a writer of books on hymnology, the principal one of which is

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the monumental work "*A Dictionary of Hymnology*, setting forth the Origin and History of Christian Hymns for all Ages and Nations." This was published in 1892, and a second edition, "Revised, with new Supplement," in 1907. He was over ten years in preparing the first edition, although he had nearly three dozen assistants to help him. The work contains over 1,600 pages, and gives an account of the origin and history of about 30,000 hymns, beginning with one by Clement of Alexandria, the earliest known hymn (excepting heathen ones) outside the bounds of Scripture. Dr. Julian estimated at that time (1892) that the number of extant Christian hymns of all ages and nations, might be approximately reckoned at 400,000, of which about 100,000 are in the German language, and nearly as many in the English; after which, for number, come the Latin and Greek.

Dr. Julian was born at St. Agnes, Cornwall, on January 27th, 1839. He was ordained in 1867, and, after holding three curacies, was appointed vicar of Wincobank, Sheffield, in 1876, which living he retained till 1905, when he accepted the vicariate of Topcliffe, Thirsk. He was appointed Canon of York in 1901. He published his first book on hymnology in 1874, and his last, *Sacred Carols, Ancient and Modern, with Musical Illustrations*, in 1909. Dr. Julian died on January 22nd, 1913.

The most eminent of all Scottish hymn writers, and well to the forefront of the world's hymnists of last century, the name of Dr. Horatius Bonar may well rank with Watts, Doddridge and Wesley. His hymns, simple enough that a child can understand, yet profoundly spiritual within, are loved and sung, not only in the land that gave him birth, but in countries beyond the seas, wherever these heavenly songs have been carried.

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Horatius Bonar was the son of a lawyer, and was born in Edinburgh, on December 19th, 1808. He was one of several brothers who all became eminent ministers in the Church of Scotland. Educated at the famous High School and University of his native city, in his student days he came under the influence of such men as Dr. Chalmers, Edward Irving and Robert Murray McCheyne. He early decided to devote his life to the Lord's service in the ministry of the Gospel, and on completing his theological course he undertook mission work at St. John's Church, Leith. It was here that he began to write hymns. Keenly interested in young folks, the Sunday School, under his care, very quickly grew and proposed. When he first began mission work he found the boys and girls listless and indifferent in the matter of public worship. Accustomed to the use of psalms, not exactly suited, either in word or tune to meet the needs of the young folks, Mr. Bonar realized that what ought to have been the brightest part of the service was to them the dullest. And yet the children loved music and were ready enough to sing songs on week-days. So he tried an experiment; choosing a few familiar tunes such as "The Flowers of the Forest," he set to work writing words to them. These he had printed in leaflet form and distributed amongst the young folks in the Sunday School. To Mr. Bonar's delight the experiment succeeded, and the children immediately took to singing the new hymns which had been specially written for them. In this way were written Horatius Bonar's first two hymns, "I lay my sins on Jesus," and "The morning, the bright and the beautiful morning."

After four and a half years' work at Leith, he became minister of the North Parish Church, Kelso, in November, 1837, where he laboured with a devotion and enthusiasm that never waned during his long and faithful

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ministry. His first sermon was long remembered by those who heard it delivered from the pulpit. It was a clarion call to prayer. "*Pray brethren!*" was his cry, "*so shall the showers of heaven descend upon our church, our parish, our schools, our families.* It is *to prayer* I urge you, to *prayer for yourselves, to prayer for me!*" But Horatius Bonar was pre-eminently a man of prayer, and in after years the voice of earnest pleading from behind the fast closed door of his study, pleading that continued often for hours at a time, formed one of the most sacred memories in his own home circle. Strong physically, Dr. Bonar was never idle. At Kelso, it is said that in one day he frequently preached three times in the pulpit and once in the open air. He was a valiant for the Truth, and even as an old man, when at Edinburgh, his stentorian voice could be heard heralding forth the Gospel in the open air, sometimes in the meadows and sometimes in Parliament Square. One friend said of him that he was always preaching, another that he was always visiting, another that he was always writing, and yet another that he was always praying.

At the Disruption of 1843 Dr. Bonar remained at Kelso as Minister of the Free Church of Scotland, and it was here that most of his best known hymns were written, including the one commencing :

" I heard the voice of Jesus say,
 ' Come unto Me and rest ;
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
 Thy head upon My breast ! ' "

which is, perhaps, the most loved of all his compositions. Through the courtesy of Miss Eliza Maitland Bonar, a daughter of the late hymnist, I am able to give a reproduction of the original manuscript taken from Dr. Bonar's notebook, which is among some of the

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Johnson
I have written to you
and will not
try to bore you
with details, but
I am very
glad to let you know
that I am
here with
the same
feelings as
when I
left you.

Dear Bob and Mary, I am sending you
the money I have saved from time
to time. I am saving
to buy a house
and have a home
of my own.

I can't afford to live
in Berkeley, see a doctor
and buy laundry off the store

I HEARD THE VOICE OF JESUS SAY.
Facsimile of
From the original MS.

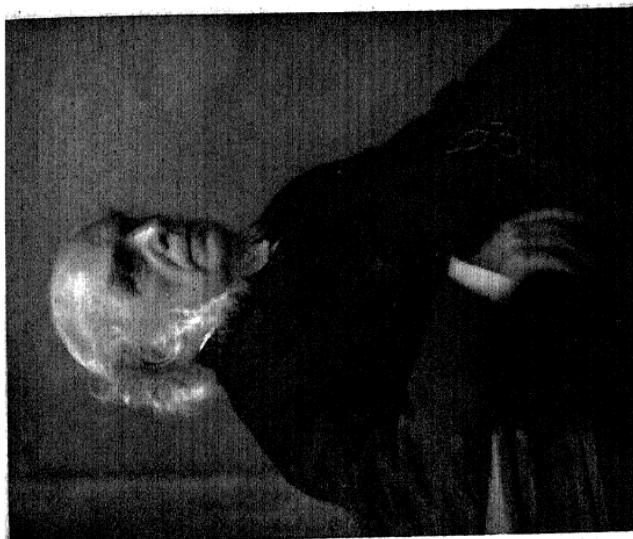


Photo: MOFFAT, EDINBURGH.

PORTRAIT OF DR. H. BONAR.

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rare treasured possessions he has left behind. It is written in pencil and is now very much worn and faded. As a hymnal manuscript it is indeed unique, and reveals the peculiar methods adopted by the author when composing his hymns. We are told "he would take his notebook, and while thinking out the lines of his hymn he would be busy with his pencil, making little sketches all over the margin of the page." In the same notebook is the original draft of "I was a wandering sheep," the mention of which recalls a rather amusing story. Years ago, in a Devonshire parish, an old farmer died. His son went to the vicar to arrange about the funeral, and said that the family would much like to have a hymn, so the vicar asked him if they had any choice. "Yes, sir," said the young man. "You see, father has always been a farmer, and he lived once in Australia, and has travelled a great deal, so we should like to have 'I was a wandering sheep.' " The family must have given some thought to the matter, because till then the hymn had never been sung in that remote church.

In 1866, Dr. Bonar removed to Edinburgh, the place of his birth, where he undertook the charge of a new church. Here he laboured till he was past eighty, and though the press of city work somewhat retarded the outpouring of hymns, yet his pen was never still. For a time he edited two magazines and was, in addition, continually publishing prose works. He was also the author of hundreds of tracts, one of which, "Believe and Live," published in 1839, reached a circulation of a million copies.

The visit to Scotland of Moody and Sankey in 1873-74 seemed to revive the flow of hymns, and about this time fresh hymns began to appear in his notebooks, many of these specially written for Mr. Sankey. Regarding one hymn written about this time, there is an interest-

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ing story. Mr. Sankey had been singing Tennyson's sad and beautiful poem, "Late, late, so late, and dark the night and chill," for which he had composed a tune. On asking permission of the owner of the copyright to use it in his collection of hymns, he was refused. So, being left with a tune without words, Sankey requested Dr. Bonar to write a hymn which would convey the same Scriptural theme. This was done, and the wellknown hymn "Yet there is room," was the result.

An outstanding feature of the hymns of this notable Scottish Presbyterian is that they belong to no particular denomination, but are in use in almost every form of Christian worship, wherever the songs of Zion are sung. Dr. Bonar wrote about six hundred hymns—not including sixty translations of different Psalms—and these are to be found in hymnals the world over. Possibly the best known are, "I heard the voice of Jesus say," "Thy way, not mine, O Lord," "I lay my sins on Jesus," "I was a wandering sheep," "A few more years shall roll," "Here, O my Lord, I see Thee face to face." His own favourite was :

"When the weary, seeking rest,
To Thy goodness flee."

At a memorial service preached at Grange, Edinburgh, the Rev. R. H. Lundie, an intimate friend of the great hymnist, said, "His hymns were written in varied circumstances, sometimes tuned by the tinkling brook that bubbled near him, sometimes tuned to the ordered tramp of the ocean, whose crested waves broke on the beach by which he wandered; sometimes set to the rude music of the railway train that hurried him to the scene of his duty; sometimes measured by the silent rhythm of the midnight stars that shone above him.

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Appropriate in closing, are the words of his “ Pilgrim Song ” :

“ A few more suns shall set
O'er these dark hills of time,
And we shall be where suns are not,
A far serener clime.”

After a lingering illness, borne with Christian fortitude, his last sun set on the 31st of July, 1889, and Dr. Horatius Bonar passed to that serener clime of which he sang—into the presence of the King.

CHAPTER III.

Some Lady Hymn Writers

SOME of the sweetest hymns in the language are the production of women. In this chapter an attempt will only be made to include a few writers whose names are familiar to the average reader. Elsewhere in this volume mention is made of many of the sweet singers in the ranks of women, whom God has inspired to pen messages of song, it may be in the quietude of the sick chamber, or amid the cares of their daily household duties. Among such hymns few hold so high a place in our affections as Charlotte Elliott's "Just as I am." Translated into almost every European language as well as Arabic, this immortal hymn, fragrant with rich evangelical doctrine, has doubtless been used in bringing more souls into the Kingdom of God than any other composition. Written in 1834, when the authoress was forty-five years old, a halo of romance has been woven around the occasion of its birth. The true history of how it came into being is a simple story, and has been told by the late Dr. Moule, Bishop of Durham, whose wife was a Miss Elliott of the same family of the famous authoress.

"Charlotte Elliott was living at Brighton with a married brother, a clergyman, the Rev. Henry Venn Elliott. The whole family had gone off to a bazaar in which they were greatly interested; and the frail invalid had been left at home alone, lying on her sofa,

SOME LADY HYMN WRITERS

with her heart a little sad at being, as usual, shut out from all good works. For her own comfort she began to ponder on the grand certainties of her salvation—her Lord, His power and His promises. Then came a sudden feeling of peace and contentment, and taking her pen, she wrote these beautiful verses, “Just as I am,” without any apparent effort. Surely they were God-given—a precious and priceless gift indeed—from her Heavenly Father to His chastened and much-loved child. As the day wore on, her sister-in-law, Mrs. H. V. Elliott, came in to see her and to bring news of the bazaar. She read the hymn and asked for a copy. So the hymn first stole out from that quiet room into the world, where since that day it has been sowing and reaping till a multitude which only God can number have been blessed through its message.”

“ Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid’st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come.”


The story of the gifted authoress’s conversion which led up to the writing of this hymn, is worthy of relating here. When Charlotte Elliott was thirty-three years of age, Dr. Malan of Geneva, a noted evangelist, visited her father’s house. One evening, when in conversation with Miss Elliott, he desired to know if she were a Christian. The young lady at first somewhat resented the question, but the subsequent conversation of this spiritually-minded preacher made a deep impression, and Dr. Malan was the means of guiding her feet into the way of peace. It is said that she afterwards kept the anniversary as a festal day, “the birthday of her soul.”

A general favourite with home missions, “Just as I am” has been blessed to myriads of souls the world

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over. Referring one day to this hymn, the brother of the noted hymnist stated : " In the course of a long ministry I hope I have been permitted to see some fruit of my labour, but I feel that far more has been done by a single hymn of my sister's." It is recorded that after Miss Elliott's death, over a thousand letters which had been received from grateful writers to whom her hymn, " Just as I am," had been blessed, were found in a locked box.

Though the name of Charlotte Elliott is best remembered by " Just as I am," her hymns number a hundred and fifty, and possibly the two next best known are, " My God, my Father, while I stray," and " Christian seek not yet repose."

Miss Elliott died at Brighton on the 22nd of September, 1871.

Of the many consecration hymns to be found within the covers of present day hymnals, none can surpass Frances Ridley Havergal's :

" Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee. . . ."

This beautiful hymn had its origin in a visit by Miss Havergal to some friends in London, where she had gone for several days' stay. In the home there was a family of ten persons, most of whom were unconverted. Desirous that she might be used to lead them to the Saviour, she prayed to God that ere she left, all in the house might be saved. The result was, before she returned to her home, every one received a blessing. On the last night of her visit, she had just retired to rest when the governess came to her bedroom with a message from the two daughters of the house. They were deeply troubled about their spiritual condition, and were shedding tears. Miss Havergal was able to put

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before them in simple language God's way of salvation, and that night the two sisters put their trust in Jesus. Overjoyed at what had taken place, Miss Havergal was unable to go to sleep, and spent most of the night in praise and renewal of her own consecration. Before the sun rose, there took form in sweet flowing lines, one after another :

“ Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee ;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

* * * *

Take my love : my Lord I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store ;
Take myself ; and I will be
Ever, only, ALL for Thee.”

Another favourite by the same writer had its origin in a singular way, when Miss Havergal was travelling in Germany. One day, coming in tired and weary after a long walk, she sat down opposite a picture, which at once attracted her attention. As she gazed on the canvas, under which were the words, “ I gave my life for thee,” her thoughts instinctively wandered to that sacred scene on Calvary’s brow, and in a moment the words of the hymn came to her with remarkable swiftness :

“ I gave My life for thee,
My precious blood I shed. . . .”

It is refreshing to read the authoress’ own words, contained in a letter to a friend, written fifteen years later, concerning the simple Gospel hymn : “ Yes, ‘ I gave my life for thee ’ is mine, and perhaps it will interest you to hear how nearly it went into the fire

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instead of nearly all over the world. It was, I think, the very first thing I wrote which could be called a hymn—written when I was a young girl, in 1859. I did not half realize what I was writing about. I was following very far off, always doubting and fearing. I think I had come to Jesus with a trembling faith, but it was a coming ‘in the press’ and behind, never seeing His face or feeling sure that He loved me. I scribbled these words in a few minutes on the back of a circular, and then read them over and thought, ‘Well, this is not poetry, anyhow; I won’t trouble to write this out.’ I reached out my hand to put it in the fire, when a sudden impulse made me draw it back, and I put it, crumpled and singed, in my pocket. Soon after, I went to see a dear old woman in the almshouse. She began talking to me, as she always did, about her dear Saviour, and I thought I would see if she, a simple old woman, would care for these verses, which I felt sure nobody else would even care to read. I read them to her, and she was so delighted with them that I copied them out and kept them. And now the Master has sent them out in all directions, and I have heard of their being a real blessing to many.”

Frances Ridley Havergal was born on December 14th, 1836, at the little village of Astley, in Worcestershire. From an early year she displayed unmistakable signs of being possessed of a keen literary gift, and by the time she reached womanhood her writings in prose and verse revealed the promptings of a sincere spiritual life, and were attracting attention.

A writer of consecration, this spirit was manifested in her life, and is embodied in the hymns she has left as a legacy to each succeeding generation. In the autumn of 1878 Miss Havergal went to reside at the Mumbles, Swansea Bay, where in the following year she passed away.

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Other familiar hymns by the same gifted writer, which have a wide circulation, are : "Like a river glorious," "I could not do without Thee," "Who is on the Lord's side?" "Golden harps are sounding," and "I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus." The last named hymn, for which Miss Havergal composed the tune *Urbane*, was written in 1874. It was the late hymnist's "own favourite," and was found in her little pocket Bible after her death.

Among lady writers of devotional and other poetry, few names are more widely known than Harriet Auber, although she is remembered by a single composition only. That one composition is a hymn of great beauty, commencing :

" Our blest Redeemer, ere He breathed
His tender last farewell,
A Guide, a Comforter bequeathed
With us to dwell."

The original manuscript was one of quite an unusual and unique character, for the hymn was first written by the gifted authoress with a diamond on a pane of glass in a window of her house at Hoddesdon, where for many years Miss Auber resided, and where, in 1862, at the patriarchal age of eighty-two, she died. She lies buried in the quaint old churchyard nearby the house in which she lived. "I happened to pay a visit some nine years since, to old Daniel Sedgwick's out-of-the-way shop of hymn literature," once wrote the Rev. Andrew Carter, editor of the *British Messenger*, "and while there met the late Rev. Dawson Campell, of Ware, Herts, an ardent lover of hymns, who, like myself, had gone to the shop in Sun Street in search of hymn books. In the course of an interesting conversation, he told me that he had for some time occupied the house at Hoddesdon in which Harriet Auber had

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formerly lived. She had written her beautiful hymn, 'Our blest Redeemer, ere He breathed,' on a pane of glass in one of the windows with a diamond, and when Mr. Campbell came into possession, the pane of glass was still intact. Anxious to have it as a curiosity specially interesting to him, he asked permission of the landlord to remove the pane, and put another in its place; but the landlord declined. And so, up to that time, some seventeen years after the author's death, the valuable manuscript of this sweet hymn remained in its place. Mr. Campbell died, I believe, only a short while afterwards; and I have often wondered what became of that pane of glass; whether it still remains unbroken, or whether some child's elbow, or some street boy's ill-habit of stone-throwing, has made an end of it. Among all the curious forms in which hymn writers have written their compositions, I fancy this is the only case on record of a hymn written by its author on a window pane."

From another source we learn that an old resident of Hoddesdon, whose relations lived in Miss Auber's house after her decease, remembered seeing the hymn on a panel of glass in one of the bedroom windows, but at a later period it was removed by some person, and since then no trace of it was ever found.

This singular circumstance of hymn writing recalls a similar instance, for, on one occasion, Robert Burns, borrowing a diamond ring from a friend, wrote some verses of a song on a window pane in the house where he stayed overnight, and this unique form of MS. is still preserved in the house at Dumfries, where the poet died in 1796.

Another lady writer whose name is remembered by a single hymn is Mrs. Margaret Mackay, a native of Inverness. This hymn, by a singular circumstance owes its origin to a visit paid to a country churchyard

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in Devonshire. Entering the little wicket gate of God's holy acre, she reverently paused for a moment to admire the beautiful surroundings. "Here was no elaborate ornament, no unsightly decay. The trim gravel walk led to the house of prayer, itself boasting of no architectural embellishment to distinguish it; and a few trees were planted irregularly to mark some favoured spots." The silent mounds were carpeted with green, and there was an atmosphere of restfulness and tranquility. Wandering amongst the tombstones her attention was arrested by the words, "Sleeping in Jesus," carved on a quaint old stone, words that told of a peaceful end to a chequered life. With the magic words running through her mind, Mrs. Mackay returned home and wrote these beautiful lines :

"Asleep in Jesus ! Blessed sleep,
From which none ever wakes to weep,
A calm and undisturbed repose
Unbroken by the last of foes !

Asleep in Jesus ! Peaceful rest,
Whose waking is supremely blest ;
No fear, no woe shall dim that hour
That manifests the Saviour's power."

Mrs. Mackay died at Cheltenham, in 1887, in her seventy-sixth year.

To an American lady, Mrs. Annie Sherwood Hawks, we are indebted for the hymn dear to every Christian heart :

"I need Thee every hour,
Stay Thou near by ;
Temptations lose their power
When Thou art nigh."

Written towards the close of last century, this hymn was wafted out to the world on the wings of

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love and joy, rather than under the stress of a great personal sorrow, with which it has been so often associated in the minds of those who sing it. Writing in 1915, Mrs. Hawks has this to say about its composition : " I remember well the morning, more than twenty years ago, when, in the midst of the daily cares of my home, then in a distant city, I was so filled with a sense of nearness to the Master, that, wondering how one could live without Him, either in joy or pain, these words, ' I need Thee every hour,' were flashed into my mind, the thought at once taking full possession of me. Seating myself by the open window in the balmy air of the bright June day, I caught my pencil, and the words were soon committed to paper, almost as they are being sung now. It was only by accident, as it would seem, that they were set to music a few months later and sung, for the first time, at a Sunday School convention held in one of the large western cities of America. From there they were taken farther west and sung by thousands of voices before the echo came back to me, thrilling my heart with surprise and gladness. For myself the hymn was prophetic rather than expressive of my own experiences at the time it was written, and I did not understand why it so touched the great throbbing heart of humanity. It was not until long years after, when the shadow fell over my way—the shadow of a great loss—that I understood something of the comforting power in the words which I had been permitted to give out to others in my hours of sweet security and peace. Now when I hear them sung, as I have sometimes by hundreds of voices in chorus, I find it difficult to realize that they were ever, consciously, my own thought or penned by my own hand."

Though Mrs. Hawks is the authoress of hundreds of hymns, " I need Thee every hour," is the one that has written her name indelibly on the heart of the Christian

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world. She passed away at the home of her daughter in Bennington, Vt., on January 3rd, 1918, at the advanced age of eighty-three.

The historic town of Melrose on the Scottish border, made famous in song and story by Sir Walter Scott, was the home of two lady hymn writers, one being Miss Clephane, who wrote "The Ninety and Nine." Regarding the birth of this remarkable hymn it is of interest that it was originally written for children. Miss Clephane was asked by the editor of *The Children's Hour* for a contribution for this magazine, and in the quiet of her room at Bridge End House, Melrose, the hymn was written as we now know it. This was about the year 1868, just the year before her death. It was not, however, till 1874 that it was discovered by Sankey, set to music, and sent forth upon its world-wide mission.

Elizabeth Cecilia Douglas Clephane, daughter of Andrew Clephane, Sheriff of Fife, was born in Edinburgh, 18th June, 1830, and when quite young was taken by her parents to reside at Melrose, where she spent the remainder of her life. "Miss Clephane and her sister were members of my church at Melrose," says Rev. James Irwin, "and though this was long before my time, there still remains a treasured memory of their whole-hearted devotion to their church. The sisters Clephane were, as Paul and Phoebe, succourers of many, and their generosity was a constant joy to my predecessor and the Church Treasurer." It was the custom of the two sisters to send for the Church Treasurer at the end of the financial year, and if he had to report a deficit, he always came away with a cheque for the amount. It is said that they gave up their horses and carriage that the sisters might have more to devote to charity.

Miss Clephane died 19th February, 1869, at Bridge

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End House, near the spot where once stood the old bridge referred to by Scott in *The Abbot* and *The Monastery*.

Living in this little border town about this time was another poetess, who had already penned her most famous hymn, although the verses had not yet been carried beyond her native land.

Just over fifty years ago, there appeared a little volume of devotional verse bearing the title, *Immanuel's Land and Other Pieces*, by A. R. C. The authoress, who thus modestly announced herself, was Anne R. Cousin. She lived to the ripe age of eighty-two, but long before she passed away she had the satisfaction of knowing that two of the pieces in her little book had found a place in a large number of hymnals, and that at least one of them was a popular favourite. The piece which gives the title to the volume is now better known as the hymn beginning, "The sands of time are sinking," while another which she entitles "The Substitute," appears in most hymn books as "O, Christ what burdens bowed Thy head!"

Mrs. Cousin was a daughter of Dr. David Ross Cundell of Leith, and was born in 1824. Her father served in the British army for several years as a surgeon, and was present at the Battle of Waterloo with the 33rd Regiment. After the peace of 1816, Dr. Cundell settled in his native town, Leith, where he died when his only child was just three years old. Mrs. Cundell, after her husband's death, removed to Edinburgh, where she resided until her daughter's marriage in 1847 to the Rev. William Cousin, then minister of Chelsea Presbyterian Church, London, but who had previously been minister at Duns, Berwickshire. Shortly after her marriage, Mrs. Cousin removed with her husband to the Free Church of Irvine, and it was there,

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about the year 1856, that she composed her best known hymn, "The sands of time are sinking," a hymn which is now known and used throughout the English-speaking world.

The hymn is a selection from a poem of nineteen verses, inspired by a long and loving study of the *Life and Letters of Samuel Rutherford*, and founded on the Scottish Martyr's dying words, "Glory dwelleth in Immanuel's Land." A song of heaven, it deservedly takes high rank, for no other hymn on this theme—so dear to the Christian heart—expresses with such emphasis, the secret joy of heaven's attraction: the glory of the Lamb that was slain.

"The sands of time are sinking,
The dawn of heaven breaks,
The summer morn I've sighed for,
The fair, sweet morn awakes.
Dark, dark has been the midnight,
But dayspring is at hand,
And glory, glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land."

Dr. John G. Paton, of the New Hebrides, in a letter to the authoress, tells of the profound impression it made upon his mind when sung by a large congregation in St. Kilda, Australia, as the old year was passing away and the new year coming in.

"O Christ, what burdens bowed Thy head," by the same writer, has been much used, and was greatly loved by Mr. Sankey, who referred to it as "a hymn very much blessed."

It was in 1860 that Mrs. Cousin removed with her husband to the Free Church, Melrose, in which town they resided for eighteen years, living afterwards in Edinburgh, where the gifted authoress died on December 6th, 1906.

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“ In the secret of His presence how my soul delights to hide !
O how precious are the lessons which I learn at Jesus’ side !
Earthly cares can never vex me, neither trials lay me low ;
For when Satan comes to tempt me, to the secret place I go.”

These sublime lines were written by Ellen Lakshmi Goreh, a Mahratta Brahmin lady of highest caste. She was born at Benares, September 11th, 1853. For many years she has laboured among her own countrywomen, often encountering opposition, but also often cheered by finding women glad to listen to the Gospel story, and by getting welcomes here and there, even in the darkest places.

Rescued from heathenism, trained by missionaries, she developed a deep spiritual life, which found expression in these beautiful lines. Truly, no one can read the experience of this converted native of India as here portrayed, without realising something of the “ secret of His presence.” Miss Goreh, though now in her seventy-eighth year, is still a zealous worker for the Master among her own people in that dark land.

A hymn which has been blessed to thousands of people, and will remain one of the authoress’s best productions, when many other songs are forgotten, is :

“ Go bury thy sorrow, the world hath its share,
Go, bury it deeply, go, hide it with care ;
Go think of it calmly, when curtained by night ;
Go tell it to Jesus, and all will be right.”

The authoress of this hymn, Mary A. Bachelor, wrote these lines when staying with her brother, to whom she was greatly attached. He was a minister, and in the usual course of his pastoral duties, felt the ever increasing cares and burdens begin to tell on his health. To him his sister confided all her joys and sorrows. One day, after having disclosed to her brother

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some peculiar trial which she was enduring, her conscience reproached her for having needlessly added to his already numerous cares. Standing by the open window she looked out upon the scene before her. Across the daisy-strewn lawn fell the heavy shadows cast by the tall poplar trees, and as she gazed, there came to her the thought. "That is just what I have done to my brother! Why did I do it? Why did I not rather bury my own sorrow, and allow only words of cheer and brightness to reach his ears?"

With these thoughts in her mind, and with tears of regret filling her eyes she retired to her little bedroom, and there penned the words of the hymn which has proved a solace to many a troubled heart.

From the sick chamber of an American lady came the hymn :

"There is a gate that stands ajar,
And through its portals gleaming,
A radiance from the cross afar,
The Saviour's love revealing.

Mrs. Lydia Baxter, the writer, was born in Petersburg, New York, in 1809, and was an invalid for many years. This hymn was written about three years before her death, when she had passed her sixtieth milestone.

During the Moody and Sankey mission in Great Britain, in 1873-74, this hymn was much used. It was sung at the watch-night service in 1873, in the Free Assembly Hall, Edinburgh, when there happened to be present a girl, Maggie Lindsay, of Aberdeen. She was much impressed by the hymn, and those seated by her side heard her exclaim, "O, heavenly Father, is it true that the gate is standing ajar for me? If it is so, I will go in."

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“ That night,” says Sankey, who tells the story, “ she became a disciple of the Lord Jesus. The next day she called on her pastor, the Rev. J. H. Wilson, minister of the Barclay Church, and told him of her decision. He was greatly pleased and advised her to tell her school companions of her experience. This she did, and succeeded in leading several of them into the light of the Gospel. Scarcely a month later, on January 28th, Maggie took a train for her home, but never reached there alive. At Manuel Junction a collision took place between a mineral train and the one on which she was travelling. A number of passengers were killed, and Maggie, all crushed and broken, was found in the wreck. In one of her hands was a copy of *Sacred Songs and Solos*, opened at her favourite hymn, ‘ There is a gate that stands ajar,’ the page of which was stained with her life’s blood. She was carried into a cottage near the station, where she lingered a few days, and was frequently heard to sing on her dying couch, the chorus of the hymn so dear to her—‘ For me, for me ! was left ajar for me ! ’ ” ..

In commemoration of this touching incident, Mr. Sankey wrote the words and music of his first hymn, “ Home at last.”

No name is more familiar among lady hymn writers of recent times than that of Ada R. Habershon, whose first hymn was written at the opening of the present century. Since then hundreds of songs for mission services have flowed from her pen. Before Miss Habershon took to writing hymns she was noted as an able writer and lecturer upon the Word of God, and on the invitation of D. L. Moody she paid a visit to America, where she delivered lectures in various parts of the country on the types of the Old Testament, which were afterwards published in book form. During

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the visit of Moody and Sankey to London in 1884, Miss Habershon had the privilege of a close friendship with the American evangelists, and on several occasions sang with Mr. Sankey. Later, when Mr. George C. Stebbins, the composer of many of Sankey's popular hymns, visited this country he stayed at the home of the Habershons. "Thus," says Miss Habershon, when speaking of these days, "the subject of hymn-writing was very prominent as we practised duets with him, and learnt and copied some of his new tunes." It was not, however, till 1901 that Ada R. Habershon attempted to write any poetry. "As I lay very ill," she tells us in her autobiography, "sweet thoughts came to cheer me, and the words arranged themselves in metre. A word of sympathy about wasted time led me to think of the Transfiguration, and of how the disciples had been led away from busy work in the plains to climb the mountains with the Master, and I wrote down the lines of ' Apart with Him.' " From that time onward her pen never ceased to respond to the promptings of the Spirit in the ministry of sacred song.

During the Torrey-Alexander Mission, Mr. Charles M. Alexander came one Sunday morning, in April, 1905, to sing and speak to the poor tramps in Gray's Yard. Miss Habershon was present at the meeting, and during the service, a thought bearing upon the theme of the speaker came to her mind, which she at once committed to verse, and jotting it down on a scrap of paper, passed it on to Mrs. Alexander. A few days later Mr. Alexander called upon her, and asked if she would write some Gospel songs for him. To this she replied that she could not write to order, but that she would pray about it, and if the Lord gave her anything he should have it. Not many hours after, Miss Habershon began her first song for him, suggested by Dr. Torrey's address that evening, and by the

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following April she had supplied Mr. Alexander with two hundred hymns. One day at Brixton, after an address by Dr. Torrey on the coming again of our Lord, Mr. Alexander happened to mention to Miss Habershon that very few hymns on this subject had taken hold on the people and become favourites. That night she began to write the hymn, "Oh, what a change!" and by the next day it was finished. This was the first of the hymns given to Mr. Alexander which was set to music and used at the meetings. It proved to be one of the favourites of the great mission, and has since been sung in many parts of the world.

It was always Miss Habershon's aim to have a definite theme in each hymn. To her the "ministry of song" had proved a very happy service, and she tells how the thoughts which have formed the subjects of the hymns have seemed to come so definitely in answer to prayer, that she could only praise the Lord for what He had given to her through them.

Ada Ruth Habershon was the youngest daughter of Dr. S. O. Habershon. She was born on January 8th, 1861, in London, where the greater part of her life was spent, with the exception of a few years at a boarding-school at Dover. "Brought up in a Christian home, with believing, praying parents, the young heart was early led by God's grace to believe in the Saviour's love, and her whole life was devoted to His service. As she grew in years she also increased in knowledge of that love, and lived in the sunshine of it." She was called home on February 1st, 1918.

Other hymns by this gifted writer which have become popular, especially in connection with mission services, are: "He will hold me fast," "No burdens yonder," "The Pilot song," "Will the circle be unbroken," "Bearing His cross," and the hymn "Longings," based on the text, "Lord Thou knowest all

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things : Thou knowest that I love Thee,"—John 21 : 17, which so fittingly expresses the soul breathings of this gifted writer :

“ I long to know Thee better
 Day by day,
I want to draw much closer
 When I pray ;
To listen more intently
 For Thy voice,
To let the things Thou choosest
 Be my choice.”

CHAPTER IV.

How Some Famous Hymns were Written

HOW often we join in the singing of the old hymns we love, hymns which are indelibly imprinted on the heart, and have become blessedly precious to us in the many vicissitudes of life's chequered pathway. Hymns which have radiated like a beacon light, piercing the gloom and brightening the way ; soul-breathings which, all unconsciously draw us nearer and still nearer to Him, the source of all our song. And yet, familiar though we may be with the hymn book, it is seldom we are able to glance beyond the hymn to the one whom God has used to pen these gems of heavenly song. Around the hymn and the hymn writer many romantic stories have been woven concerning the circumstances under which some hymn or other was written. Not always is a hymn born out of any particular experience through which the author has passed. Such cases, however, do exist. Yet the stories frequently told are pure fancy, started by one and augmented by another, until they become almost a reality to many who hear them for the first time. Many and interesting are the anecdotes attached to a hymn through its use, which, no doubt, has become precedence instead of sequence, in their telling. For example, various accounts have been given as the origin of Charles Wesley's immortal hymn, "Jesus, Lover of my soul." One is, that as he sat in his study on a summer day, a

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little bird, pursued by a hawk, flew into the open window, and sought refuge in his bosom where the baffled hawk did not dare to follow. This incident, it is said, set him musing on the best and indeed the only refuge for sinful souls. Another, that a narrow escape from death in a violent storm on the Atlantic inspired him to portray the thoughts of a Christian in deadly peril. These and similar stories, charming and romantic though they may appear, have no foundation of fact, and the most that can be said is that the immortal hymn was written shortly after the great spiritual change which the author underwent in 1738. Its popularity does not wane with age, but on the contrary, increases with each succeeding generation, and to-day it is to be found in the hymn books of practically all English-speaking countries.

Charles Wesley was born at Epworth Rectory in Lincolnshire, in 1707, and died in 1788. He is credited with having written more than 6,000 hymns, and his strenuous advocacy of the use of hymns in public worship, in conjunction with his famous brother, John, powerfully influenced the course of English hymnody.

The companion hymn of "Jesus, Lover of my soul," has an equally attractive history. What appears to be accepted as the authentic circumstances under which "Rock of Ages" was written has often been told, but will bear recording here. Augustus Montague Toplady, sometime curate-in-charge of the parish of Blagdon, on the Mendips, about eight miles from Wells, was one day overtaken by a severe thunderstorm in Burrington Combe, a rocky glen which runs up into the heart of the Mendip Range. There being no habitation near at hand, he took refuge between two massive pillars of rock. At one point of the rugged slopes of grey rock, there is a precipitous crag of limestone, about a hundred feet in height, and right down its centre is a deep fissure.

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It was here, sheltering from the fury of the storm, that Toplady penned the famous hymn :

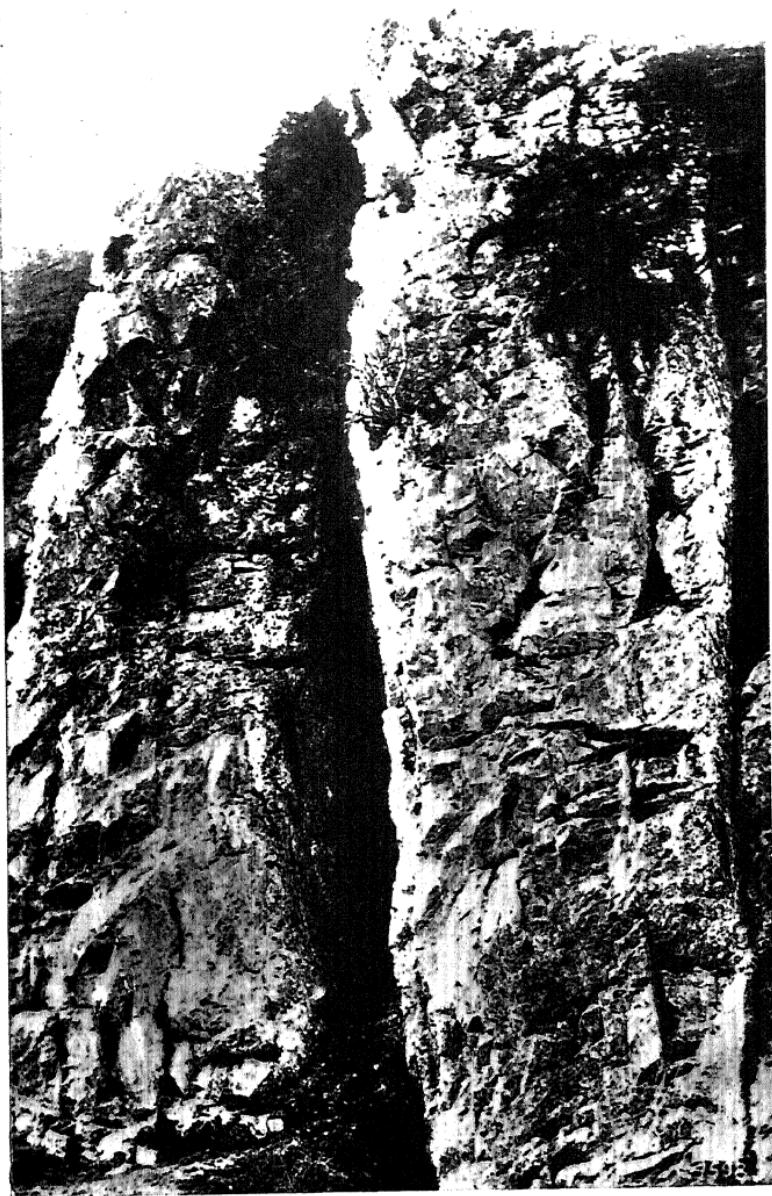
“ Rock of Ages cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee ;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure :
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.”

Toplady was the son of a major in the British army, who died at the siege of Cartagena in 1740, leaving his infant son to the care of a tender but judicious mother. When only a lad of sixteen, Toplady was converted in a barn in Ireland. He was travelling with his mother, when, passing a barn, he heard singing. Looking in he observed a few humble country people gathered together. When the hymn ended, a plain, uneducated man, stood up to speak, taking for his text, “ Ye, who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” (Eph. ii, 13.) That sermon was used of God in the salvation of his soul.

“ Rock of Ages ” was first published in 1775, only three years before the author’s death, which occurred on August 11th, 1778, at the comparatively early age of thirty-eight.

It was a great favourite of Mr. W. E. Gladstone, who translated it into Latin, Greek and Italian. As the Prince Consort lay dying, his lips feebly uttered the sweet words of Toplady’s hymn. And thus it happened that the Prince, in his latest hour, laid hold on those precious thoughts which had their birth in the simple but faithful discourse of an obscure and unlettered layman in an Irish barn.

Of “ Rock of Ages,” Dr. Julian says, “ No other English hymn can be named, which has laid so broad and firm a grasp of the English-speaking world.”



ROCK OF AGES, BURRINGTON COMBE.

The birthplace of Toplady's famous hymn.

HOW SOME FAMOUS HYMNS WERE WRITTEN

Though Henry Francis Lyte wrote many beautiful hymns, his last composition, "Abide with me! Fast falls the eventide," proved to be the best known and most widely used of all. He was born at the village of Ednam, near Kelso, on the Scottish border, on June 1st, 1793. It is surely to the credit of this little village on the banks of the Tweed, that it gave birth also to James Thomson, the author of "Rule Britannia," and Thomas Campbell the poet, who wrote "Ye mariners of England."

Intended for the medical profession, his plans were changed, and Lyte was ordained a clergyman in the Church of England at the age of twenty-three. Filling several curacies, he eventually became Vicar of All Saints, Brixham, in South Devon, where, for nearly a quarter of a century, he laboured faithfully amongst the rough seafaring population to whom he had become greatly endeared. Mr. Lyte never enjoyed robust health, and in the autumn of 1847 the increased weakness of his constitution, brought about by his faithful devotion to his beloved flock, demanded a complete change, and the doctors ordered his removal to the South of France that he might spend the winter in a more congenial clime. A few days before leaving home, he wrote: "I am meditating flight again to the south. The little faithful robin is every morning at my window warning me that autumnal hours are at hand. The swallows are preparing for flight, and inviting me to accompany them; and yet, alas! while I am talking of flying, I am just able to crawl, and I often ask myself whether I shall be able to leave England at all."

On the Sunday previous to his departure, though in great weakness of body, he made an effort to address his beloved flock once more. His subject was "Holy Communion," and earnestly did he beseech his hearers to acquaint themselves with the Lord Jesus Christ:

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that they might place their trust in His sacrificial death on Calvary. He had preached his last sermon. The severe strain of the service, followed by the painful leave-taking of his sorrowing parishioners, greatly exhausted the faithful pastor, and he was led home in much weakness. All that afternoon he rested his soul in sweet repose, pondering over the farewell words he had so lately addressed to his congregation. In the evening of that beautiful September day, in 1847, he left the house alone, and wandered for an hour among the rocks and flowers in the grounds of his home at Berry Head, until dark.

It happened that on that particular night there was one of those glorious sunsets which are sometimes to be seen at Torbay. "The sun was setting in a blaze of glory, and the purple hills of distant Dartmoor stood out darkly against a flaming sky." In the foreground was Brixham harbour, calm and peaceful. Several times Mr. Lyte stopped to rest and to gaze on the wonderful manifestation of nature. His feelings can well be imagined. The dying day would no doubt remind him insistently of his life which was swiftly drawing to a close. It was during this evening walk that the poet was filled with a fervent desire to write one message of consolation to humanity which would be enduring, and returning to his study Lyte wrote the immortal hymn. Before retiring to rest he handed to his daughter, Mrs. Hogg, the manuscript bearing the undying lines :

" Abide with me : fast falls the eventide ;
The darkness deepens ; Lord with me abide :
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me ! "

On the following day he left home for Nice, where, a few weeks later, he passed away. As he neared the

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end, a smile illuminated his placid face, and pointing upwards, he whispered softly, "Peace ! Joy ! "

F. A. Jones, in his delightful book, *Famous Hymns and their Authors*, tells in a very entertaining manner of his casual meeting, over forty years ago, with an old member of Mr. Lyte's choir. As the two sat on the old pier at Brixham, watching the trawlers setting sail for the fishing grounds, the old man chatted animatedly about the late hymnist, evidently well pleased to find some one who took an interest in a man of whom he was palpably never tired of talking. "I was a member of Mr. Lyte's choir," he said, "in 1846 ; I and a dozen others, all dead now. We were deeply attached to him. He had the gentlest expression and most winning manner possible, and yet I suppose we caused him more grief than all his trouble of ill-health. We left his choir and gave up teaching in the Sunday School, and though I should probably do the same thing to-morrow under similar circumstance, it gives me a feeling of intense sadness even now when I think of it. This is how it came about. A short while before he left us to go to Nice, some influential members of the Plymouth Brethren visited Brixham and persuaded ten of us to join them. After due deliberation we went in a body to Mr. Lyte and told him that we intended to leave his church. He took it calmly enough, although we practically constituted his entire choir, and said that nothing would be further from his thoughts than to stand between us and our consciences. He bade us think the matter over very seriously and come to him again in a few days. We did so, but our decision remained unaltered. We left him, and never entered his church again. When 'Abide with me' came to be written, each of us was given a copy, and then we realized, perhaps more keenly than any one else, the true meaning of the words :

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‘When other *helpers* fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.’”

A few years ago, when, at the King’s express wish, this hymn was sung at the Wembley Stadium, by nearly a hundred thousand people, His Majesty described it as “a most impressive experience.” The sweet solemnity, sacred grandeur, and pathetic strains of “Abide with me,” thrill the soul to its depths. It has strengthened and consoled millions of people, and will continue its gracious ministry throughout all time.

How the familiar hymn, “Blest be the tie that binds,” came to be written is an interesting story. Dr. John Fawcett was pastor of a small and poor Baptist Church, at Wainsgate, in Yorkshire, from which he derived a salary barely adequate to live upon ; and his family increasing far more rapidly than his income, he thought it his duty to accept a call which he received in 1772, to a large and influential church in London, to succeed the celebrated Dr. Gill. He preached his farewell sermon, and began loading his belongings on several wagons for removal to his new residence. The sorrowing members of his poor church, unable to control the grief that filled their hearts, pleaded with him that even now he might not leave them, and when at last all was ready for departure the warm hearted Yorkshire folks clung around their pastor and his family with an affection almost beyond description. Completely overcome at such unmistakable evidence of attachment, the good man and his wife sat down on one of the packing cases and wept. “Oh, John, John, I cannot bear this !” cried the poor wife, “I know not how to go !” “Nor I, either,” said the good man ; “nor will we go. Unload the wagons, and put everything in the place where it was before.” His decision was hailed with great joy by the people. A letter was

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immediately despatched to the London church intimating that his coming was impossible, and the good man went to work with renewed energy, happy to remain with his poor but attached country congregation, "passing rich" on £25 a year.

It was to commemorate this event that Dr. Fawcett wrote the words of the hymn now so familiar :

" Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love ;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

* * * * *

We share our mutual woes,
Our mutual burdens bear ;
And often for each other flows
The sympathising tear."

The story of how "God moves in a mysterious way" came to be written is an oft-told tale, and yet this volume would not be complete without its inclusion. William Cowper, the poet, was born at the Rectory of Berkhamstead, on November 26th, 1731. In his boyhood he was of a sensitive, shy, and nervous temperament, and in later life was given to fits of temporary insanity. During one of these painful experiences, he became possessed with the idea that he should go to a particular part of the River Ouse and drown himself. He hired a post chaise for that purpose and started. The night was dark, and the coachman purposely losing his way, brought the poet safely back to his home again. By this time the cloud seemed to have lifted from his mind, and in deep contrition and thankfulness to God for his deliverance from danger and from death, he wrote this hymn, which, for more than a century and a half, has brought comfort and consolation to many a troubled soul :

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“ God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform ;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

* * * *

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take !
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy ; and shall break
In blessings on your head.”

Of this hymn Montgomery says, “ It is a lyric of high tone and character, and rendered awfully interesting by the circumstances under which it was written, in the twilight of departing reason.”

Some of the happiest years of Cowper’s chequered life were spent at Olney in sweet fellowship with his devoted friend John Newton, in conjunction with whom were written the famous Olney Hymns. He died on April 25th, 1800.

Of the three hundred and forty-eight “ Olney Hymns,” Cowper wrote sixty-eight. Possibly his most widely used hymn is “ There is a fountain filled with blood,” which is still a general favourite, particularly at mission services. Others equally well known are : “ O for a closer walk with God,” “ Hark, my soul ! it is the Lord,” “ Far from the world, O Lord, I flee,” and “ Sometimes a light surprises the Christian when he sings.” Cowper’s hymns are set in a plaintive key, and lack the joyous note of gladness to be felt in the compositions of his contemporaries. The last mentioned hymn is rather an exception, and strikes a brighter note.

The best known of all missionary hymns, “ From Greenland’s icy mountains,” is probably one of the most unique examples of spontaneous writing on

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record, for, from the moment Reginald Heber took up his pen till the hymn was completed, the time occupied was only twenty minutes. And the only alteration the author ever made was to substitute the word "heathen" for "savage" in the second verse. Heber, at that time Rector of Hodnet, was on a visit to his father-in-law, Dr. Shipley, Dean of St. Asaph and Vicar of Wrexham. It was the Saturday before Whitsunday, 1819, the day upon which a collection was to be taken in aid of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and they being together with a few friends in the Vicarage library, the Dean requested his son-in-law to write something suitable to be sung at the missionary service next morning. Heber, having procured writing material, immediately retired to the far end of the room. In a short time the Dean called out to know what he had written, whereon Heber read over the first three verses. "There, there, that will do very well," said the Dean. Heber, however, was not satisfied, remarking that the sense was not yet complete; and again taking up his pen, in a few minutes wrote the fourth verse :

" Waft, waft ye winds His story,
And you, ye waters, roll,
Till like a sea of glory
It spreads from pole to pole ;
Till o'er our ransomed nature
The Lamb for sinners slain,
Redeemer, King, Creator,
In bliss returns to reign."

To Heber's repeated request to be allowed to add yet another verse, the Dean was inexorable. It was sung for the first time the next morning in Wrexham church to the old ballad tune, "'Twas when the sea was roaring," but has since been set to more appropriate music. "The original manuscript of 'From

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Greenland's icy mountains,' " says F. A. Jones, " was for many years in the possession of the late Dr. Raffles, of Liverpool, himself a hymn writer of some note. Popular tradition round Wrexham has it that a compositor in the printing works sold the MS. for a pint of ale ; but it is far more likely that Dr. Raffles obtained it direct from the printer who was a personal friend of his. A few years since, Dr. Raffles' effects were sold, and among the objects of interest put up for auction was this identical MS. After some spirited bidding it was ' knocked down ' to an unknown buyer for the sum of forty guineas. On the authority of the auctioneer the MS. is now in America."

During the visit of H.R.H. The Prince of Wales to Ceylon, in the spring of 1922, a paragraph relating to this hymn, which received some prominence in the Press at the time, attracted my attention. Under the headline, "Only Man is Vile," some enterprising journalist had written :

" The Cingalese, who have given the Prince of Wales such a hearty reception, have shown some warrantable resentment of the verse of a famous hymn which describes Ceylon as a place where 'only man is vile.' Bishop Heber, in writing the hymn, seems to have allowed animosity as well as devotion to colour his phrases, for the libellous line is said to have been written just after he had discovered himself to have been cleverly cheated by a Cingalese tradesman."

It would not be a difficult matter to show that this fantastic and highly coloured story regarding the origin of the famous hymn is sheer imagination, and that Reginald Heber was in no way prompted to pen the supposed offensive line in a spirit of animosity, on finding himself " cleverly cheated by a Cingalese tradesman," for up to that time the hymnist had not

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set eyes on so interesting a personage as a tradesman from Ceylon's Isle. As we have seen, the hymn was written at Wrexham, in 1819, just four years before Heber accepted the Bishopric of Calcutta, so that the picture of the good Bishop being swindled by a dusky native at once loses its colour. One also wonders if it be actually the case, as the paragraph states, that those very fastidious natives have really shown "some warrantable resentment" of the line, which, as asserted, describes Ceylon as a place 'where only man is vile.' A more careful study of the second verse which contains the offending line will, I think, show that Heber had a wider field in his intellectual vision than Ceylon's Isle.

Exception has been taken to the line, "What though the spicy breezes blow soft o'er Ceylon's Isle." As we have already stated, Heber had not visited Ceylon at the time the hymn was written, and it is interesting to read an extract from his journal of a visit to India, written four years after the composition of the hymn.

"Though we were now too far off Ceylon to catch the odours of the land, yet it is, we are assured, perfectly true that such odours are perceptible to a very considerable distance. In the Straits of Malacca a smell like that of a hawthorn hedge is commonly experienced; and from Ceylon, at thirty or forty miles, under certain circumstances, a yet more agreeable scent is inhaled."

For about three years Heber pursued the strenuous duties of a missionary bishop, and died at Trichinopoly in April, 1826.

As a hymn writer Reginald Heber occupies a high place. Of his fifty-seven compositions, nearly all are in use: an honour which has fallen to the lot of very few hymn writers. Among the best known are, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!" "Brightest and best of the sons of the morning," "The Son of God goes

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forth to war," and "Thou art gone to the grave," a funeral hymn written after the death of his infant child.

Though manners and customs change with the march of time, there is happily still to be heard in many of our towns and villages, the cheerful strains of old-time Christmas carols. Chief amongst those which have survived, is "Christians awake, salute the happy morn!" It was written nearly two hundred years ago to suit the whim of a spoilt child. And little did John Byrom realise as he playfully presented to his favourite daughter, Dolly, one Christmas morning, a neatly folded sheet of note paper, on which were written the verses, that the hymn would become famous. It is dedicated by the author to Dolly, the fond father having promised to provide the little maid with a carol for Christmas Day. A year or two later, the manuscript coming into the hands of John Wainwright, organist of Manchester Old Parish Church, he set the words to the tune now so familiar. On the Christmas Eve following, Wainwright took his choristers over to Kersal Cell, the home of Byrom, and they sang the hymn for the first time as they stood round the old doorway, while the author, taken entirely by surprise, listened entranced within. The original manuscript, creased and worn, is now carefully preserved in the Chetham Library at Manchester. It is written on an ordinary sheet of notepaper, and is headed "Christmas Day for Dolly."

I am indebted to Mr. Chas. T. E. Phillips, librarian, who had the interesting document photographed for this work, and the illustration is used through the courtesy of the Feoffees of Chetham's Library.

In connection with this famous hymn an interesting discovery was made some years ago in a garden at Stockport, adjoining the church. While preparing the foundations of a new greenhouse, the owner came

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British wrote while the happy Moon
Boreon the Savior of the world was born
Hie to acon the mystery of love
Which hosts of Angels planted boun down
With them the joyful hours first began
Of God incarnate & the Virgin, on
Then to the watchful heralds they say
He now redeems Angelic souls, see-saw !

3 books. Tidings of the happy birth
To you and all the nations of the earth
In which God fulfilled his promise born
This day is born for ever & the last
In David is to ~~begin~~ ye Judge King
The long for to recover of mankind
Drawn up in swarms, death & by the Son
Of Earth contains the hell to be devide
the works & straightway the celestial were
In hymns of joyful voices before his side
The hosts of recovering, they say
Did hymns there & with hallooings
With their song as their banner
Peace with earth & manna from

So Britain joined & swelled the numbers
To see the Wonder from his world to see
They saw their Savior at the Virgin said
She said, I noted in the Manger laid
Joseph & Mary a distressed pair
Guided the sole object & amiss'd her
To human eye none except of King two
There Jesus was smiling however to see
Amidst the weeping they say
The angels with their instruments sang
The first song at his birth fame
But Mary kept a secret in her heart
The mystery which will never depart
She to this block & training her eyes
With tears remov'd the mirth from them
Let us like her sing & sing the more
For salvation & to gain the joy &
Like Mary let us wonder & extol
God's wondrous love & saving skill
Until & thankful to this form we
Tell Christ the secret to the heart conceal
True to the late & late return
From his poor Master in his latter days
Follow us him who was no other man
In this first chapter let us & he resell

the day of his arrival, when the arrows
of sin, redoubt, a glad trumpet sing
He that was born upon that joyful day
Bore us all the gloom & desolation
Laid by his love instead we shall sing
of angels & of Angel-men the King.



CHRISTIANS AWAKE !

Facsimile of the original MS.

Inset: John Byrom as a young man.

Specially photographed for this work by courtesy of the Feoffees of Chetham Library, Manchester.

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upon a gravestone about a foot and a half below the surface of the ground. On examination it was found to bear the inscription :

“Here lieth John Wainwright,
Organist, Parish Church, Manchester,
died January 17.”

It proved to be the gravestone of Wainwright, the composer of the music of “Christians Awake!” A portion of the slab which bore the date was broken off. John Wainwright was buried in Stockport churchyard in 1768. When the church was being restored in 1810 it was found necessary to use explosives for the demolition of the tower, and during the operations many of the gravestones were broken and displaced.

But to return to Byrom. He was born in 1691 on the outskirts of Manchester, in a house still known as Kersal Cell. It was originally a monastic cell, and there still exist traces of an ancient chapel within the building. Byrom appears to have been a somewhat remarkable personality, and though he wrote much verse, it is probable his name would have been forgotten but for “Christians Awake!” During his lifetime Byrom invented a system of shorthand, which he taught, among his pupils being Horace Walpole and Charles Wesley. Educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, he took his B.A. in 1712, becoming a Fellow in 1714. He studied medicine, but never attempted to qualify as a medical practitioner. Amongst his friends he was known as the Poet Laureate of the Jacobites, and many a witty and clever rhyme, which on more than one occasion got him into trouble, came from his pen.

Byrom died in 1763, at the age of 72, and is buried in Manchester Cathedral.

When John Henry Newman, in an anxious moment,

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took up pencil and paper and scribbled some verses, giving expression to the doubts that distressed him, as well as the mental darkness that he at that time experienced, he little dreamed that birth had been given to a hymn which would live to be sung by people of almost every clime and tongue. That hymn begins :

“ Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on !
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead Thou me on !
Keep Thou my feet ; I do not ask to see
The distant scene—one step enough for me.”

In the early summer of 1833, Newman, who was at that time Incumbent of St. Mary’s Church, Oxford, paid a visit to Rome, where he saw and heard much that was to influence his life in years to come. On his homeward journey he became dangerously ill of fever, which necessitated a stay of about three weeks in Sicily, during which time the only friend at hand to tend to his wants was his faithful servant, who watched over him night and day. Upon his recovery, Newman took passage on an orange boat for Marseilles, being under the impression that he must at once return to England and begin a reformation of the Church in accordance with his peculiar views. Of this historic journey Cardinal Newman afterwards wrote : “ Towards the end of May I set off for Palermo, taking three days for the journey. Before starting from my inn in the morning, I sat down on my bed and began to sob bitterly. My servant, who had acted as my nurse, asked what ailed me. I could only answer, ‘ I have a work to do in England.’ I was aching to get home, yet for want of a vessel I was kept at Palermo for three weeks. I began to visit the churches and they calmed my impatience. At last I got off in an orange boat bound for Marseilles.

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We were becalmed for a whole week in the Straits of Bonifacio. Then it was I wrote the lines 'Lead, kindly Light,' which have since become so well known."

Much controversy has taken place from time to time over the meaning of the two closing lines of the hymn :

" And with the morn those angel faces smile,
 Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile."

In 1879, on being asked to solve the problem, the author is said to have replied that he was not bound to remember his own meaning after the lapse of almost fifty years !

The vicar of an English parish church once wrote to the celebrated Dean Alford of Canterbury Cathedral, asking him if he would compose a hymn and tune to be sung in the procession at a choral festival. The Dean consented, and sent his friend a hymn which was quite unsuitable for a march. In writing back, the Vicar cautiously advised the good Dean to go into his Cathedral, walk slowly along the course the procession would take and compose as he marched. Dean Alford, not in the least offended, did so, and produced the hymn, beginning :

" Forward ! be our watchword,
 Steps and voices joined,
 Seek the things before us,
 Not a look behind."

The second line is a reminder to the vicar of the place and manner in which the hymn was composed.

Besides writing the words, the Dean composed the treble and bass of the tune to which it was originally sung, humorously remarking to his friend, that he had supplied the hymn with hat and boots, so it was up to him to provide its coat and trousers.

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To Dean Alford we are indebted not only for his scholarly expository on the New Testament, but also for some classic hymns to be found in most present-day hymnals. He died at his deanery on January 12th, 1871.

The hymn "Stand up! Stand up for Jesus!" which, for the last fifty years has been sung the world over, was suggested to the author by the dying message of Dudley A. Tyng, the faithful minister of Epiphany Church, Philadelphia, during the great Revival of 1859. Mr. Tyng was the leader of a remarkable mission in connection with the Young Men's Christian Association of Philadelphia. The Sunday before his death was a memorable one, when there assembled in Jaynes Hall, five thousand men to hear what proved to be one of the most impressive sermons ever preached; and it is said that out of those present at least a thousand were converted.

A few days later, while watching a mule at work on a horse-power machine, threshing corn, Mr. Tyng happened to step forward to pat the animal on the neck, when the sleeve of his coat became entangled in the wheels, and his arm was torn off. He died soon after. Just before he passed away he sent the message to those assembled at the Y.M.C.A. prayer meeting held that evening, "Tell them to stand up for Jesus!" George Duffield preached the funeral sermon for his friend, concluding with the exhortation in Ephesians vi, 14. Soon afterwards he composed the stirring hymn :

" Stand up! stand up for Jesus !
Ye soldiers of the Cross ;
Lift high His royal banner,
It must not suffer loss ;
From victory unto victory
His army shall He lead,
Till every foe is vanquished,
And Christ is Lord indeed."

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The Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould, was one of the most prolific writers of his day. Versatile in gifts and strenuous in application, he has crowded great achievements into his long years. A student of mediaeval lore, history and theology, in which he has been greatly aided by extensive travels and researches in Europe, he was an authoritative writer in these fields, and has well over a hundred volumes to his credit. It is at least probable, however, that he will go down to posterity as the author of one hymn. "Onward Christian soldiers" is known in all parts of the English-speaking world. The hymn was originally written in 1865 for a Sunday School festival in connection with his church at Horbury Bridge, Yorkshire, of which Mr. Baring-Gould was at that time the incumbent. In 1895 he said regarding its composition : "Whit-Monday is a great day for school festivals in Yorkshire. On Whit-Monday, thirty years ago, it was arranged that our school should join forces with that of a neighbouring village. I wanted the children to sing when marching from one village to another, but couldn't think of anything quite suitable ; so I sat up all night, resolved that I would write something myself. 'Onward Christian Soldiers' was the result. It was written in great haste, and I am afraid some of the rhymes are faulty. Certainly nothing has surprised me more than its popularity. I don't remember how it got printed first, but I know that very soon it found its way into several collections. I have written a few other hymns since, but only two or three have become at all well known."

"Onward Christian soldiers" was on that occasion sung to Gauntlet's tune, for Sullivan had not then composed that stirring march, which in no small measure has contributed to the immense popularity of the hymn.

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About eighteen years ago, during some correspondence with the author in connection with his famous hymn, Mr. Baring-Gould kindly sent me an autograph copy of the chorus of "Onward Christian soldiers," which I am able to have reproduced here.

*Onward Christian Soldiers
Marching as to war
With the cross of Jesus
Going on before.*

S. Baring-Gould

The likeness of S. Baring-Gould was sent to me by the noted hymnist some years later. It is from a portrait by Mr. Melton Fisher, R.A., and was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1921.

A little-known chapter in the career of this noted hymnist relates to the West Riding. In 1864, while curate, he opened a night school for miners and artizans at Horbury Bridge. Then he built a mission chapel, which first of all heard the sweet evening hymn, "Now the day is over."

S. Baring-Gould died in January, 1924, at the advanced age of ninety years.

"Hold the Fort" is a hymn which at once sprung into great favour over half a century ago, as a splendid rallying song, and maintained its popularity for many years. It had its origin in the following historic incident which occurred during the American Civil War: "Just before Sherman began his famous march to the sea in 1864, and while his army lay camped in the neighbourhood of Atlanta on the 5th of October, the army of Hood, in a carefully prepared movement,

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passed the right flank of Sherman's army, gained his rear, and commenced the destruction of the railway leading north, burning blockhouses and capturing the small garrisons along the line. Sherman's army was put in rapid motion pursuing Hood, to save the supplies and larger posts, the principal one of which was located at Altoona Pass. General Corse was stationed here with about 1,500 men. A million and a half of rations were stored here, and it was highly important that the earthworks commanding the pass and protecting the supplies should be held. Six thousand men under the command of General French were detailed by Hood to take the position. The works were completely surrounded and summoned to surrender. Corse refused and a sharp fight commenced. The defenders were slowly driven into a small fort on the crest of the hill. Many had fallen, and the result seemed to render a prolongation of the fight hopeless. At this moment an officer caught sight of a white signal flag far away across the valley, twenty miles distant, upon the top of Kenesaw Mountain. The signal was answered, and soon the message was waved across from mountain to mountain : 'Hold the fort ; I am coming !' It was the message of General Sherman. Cheers went up ; every man was nerved to a full appreciation of the position ; and under a murderous fire, which killed or wounded more than half the garrison, they held the fort for three hours until the advance guard of Sherman's army came up. The attacking force was obliged to retreat."

Major Whittle related this incident at a Sunday School conference when Mr. P. P. Bliss was present, and the song "Hold the Fort" was born in his mind. The same night Bliss wrote the words and music of the now popular song.

Next day at a young people's meeting he went on to the platform, and writing the chorus of the hymn on the

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blackboard, sang the verses for the first time in public, the audience joining in the chorus.

No other hymn attained a greater popularity wherever it was sung during the Torrey-Alexander Gospel tour of the world over twenty-five years ago, than "The Glory Song." It has been translated into more than a score of languages and dialects, and it is said that more than a hundred million copies have been printed. When I asked Charles H. Gabriel, the author, to tell me something of its origin, he wrote : "'The Glory Song' was prompted by the slogan of a good old soul we called 'Old Glory Face.' The one safety valve of his pent-up enthusiasm in praise of his Lord was the single exclamation—'Glory !' And it was good to hear him shout it—not in a harsh, raucous tone of voice, yet distinctly and with a charm of earnestness that carried a conviction of holy reverence to all who heard. To hear him pray was to see the gates of heaven open, and to be drawn nearer to the God he served, his prayer invariably ended with : ' and that will be glory for me ! ' 'Old Glory Face' is in heaven now, but he lived to sing 'The Glory Song,' and to know that out of his life, before men, came the inspiration that gave the song to the world."

Though it cannot be termed a famous hymn, "The Harbour Bell" has gained no small amount of popularity as a Gospel song, and has been found useful in meetings held specially for seafaring men :

" Our life is like a stormy sea,
Swept by the gales of sin and grief ;
While on the windward and the lee,
Hang heavy clouds of unbelief."

John H. Yates, a layman in humble circumstances who lived in New York, wrote this hymn about the

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year 1891, after reading in a newspaper the following incident, which had been narrated by one of the passengers. "We were nearing a dangerous coast as the night was approaching. Suddenly a heavy fog settled down upon us. No lights had been sighted, and the pilot seemed anxious and troubled, not knowing how soon we might be dashed to pieces on the hidden rocks along the shore. The whistle was blown loud and hard, but no response was heard. The captain ordered the engines to be stopped, and for some time we drifted about at the mercy of the waves. Suddenly the pilot cried 'Hark !' Far away in the distance we heard the welcome tones of the harbour bell, which seemed to say 'This way, this way !' Again the engines were started, and, guided by the welcome sound, we entered the harbour in safety." The words were set to music by Sankey, and it became one of his favourite solos. Here is the chorus :

" ' This way, this way, O heart opprest,
So long by storm and tempest driven ;
This way, this way—lo ! here is rest.'
Rings out the harbour bell of heaven."

Many years ago, during Revival meetings in Scotland, a young servant girl became anxious about her spiritual condition. Returning from one of the services she called at the manse, and enquired of her minister how she might be saved.

"Hoot, lassie," said he, "don't be alarmed ! Just read your Bible and say your prayers, and you will soon be all right."

"Oh, Minister," wailed the poor illiterate lassie, as the tears came to her eyes, "I canna read, I canna pray !" Then lifting her eyes upward, she cried, "Lord Jesus, tak' me as I am !" Her simple prayer

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was answered, and she became a faithful follower of Christ.

Eliza H. Hamilton, hearing the story of the Scottish lassie's experience, wrote the hymn "Take me as I am," which was soon after set to music by Sankey, and proved a great favourite at revival meetings. Here is the first verse and chorus :

" Jesus, my Lord, to Thee I cry ;
Unless Thou help me, I must die :
Oh, bring Thy free salvation nigh,
And take me as I am !
And take me as I am ! And take me as I am !
My only plea—Christ died for me !
Oh, take me as I am ! "

The origin of the words and melody of that dearly loved sacred song "The sweet by-and-by," a song pregnant with hallowed memories, forms interesting reading. The author is Mr. S. Fillmore Bennett. In the village of Elkhorn, Wisconsin, U.S.A., where he lived in the early sixties, he had among his personal friends, a composer named Joseph P. Webster. He was of a very nervous and sensitive nature, and subject to periods of depression. Knowing the peculiarities of his friend, Bennett could tell at a glance if he was in one of his melancholy moods, and would endeavour to rouse him by giving him the words of a song or hymn to set to music. On one occasion Webster came into his friend's office, and walking towards the fire, stood for some time with his elbow resting on the mantelpiece, without speaking a word. In telling the story, Mr. Bennett relates :

" ' Webster,' I said, ' what is the matter now ? '
" ' It is no matter,' he replied ; ' It will be all right by and by ! ' "

" The idea of the hymn came to me like a flash of sunlight, and I replied :

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“ ‘ The sweet by and by ! would that not make a good hymn ? ’

“ ‘ Maybe it would,’ said he indifferently.

“ Turning to the desk I penned the three verses and chorus as fast as I could write. In the meantime two friends had come in. I handed the hymn to Mr. Webster. As he read it his eye kindled, and his whole demeanour changed. Stepping to the desk he started writing the notes in a moment, and taking up his violin played over the melody. In a few moments more he had the notes for the four parts of the chorus jotted down. I think it was not over thirty minutes from the time I took up my pen to write the words before the two friends, Webster and myself were singing the hymn in the same form in which it was afterwards published and became popular. While singing, another friend entered, and, after listening awhile, with tears in his eyes, uttered the prediction, ‘ That hymn is immortal.’ ”

It was first published in a book of songs called *The Signet Ring*, issued soon after the American Civil War. It is now in numerous collections, and has been translated into various foreign languages, and is sung in almost every land under the sun.

Many fanciful stories have been told and written pertaining to the origin of Bishop Bickersteth’s exquisite hymn, “ Peace, perfect peace,” and it is refreshing to read an authentic account of its composition which the late hymnist’s son, Dr. S. Bickersteth, furnished Dr. Julian. The hymn, which was the work of a few moments, was written in a house facing the Stray, Harrogate, at which the bishop was staying during the summer of 1875. “ On a Sunday morning in August, the Vicar of Harrogate, Canon Gibbon, happened to preach from the text, ‘ Thou wilt keep him

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in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee,' and alluded to the fact that in the Hebrew the words are 'Peace, peace,' twice repeated, and happily translated in the 1611 translation by the phrase 'Perfect peace.' This sermon set my father's mind working on the subject. He always found it easiest to express in verse whatever subject was uppermost in his mind, so that when on the afternoon of that Sunday he visited an aged and dying relative, Archdeacon Hill of Liverpool, and found him somewhat troubled in mind, it was natural to him to express in verse the spiritual comfort which he desired to convey. Taking up a sheet of paper he then and there wrote down the hymn just exactly as it stands, and read it to this dying Christian.

"I was with my father at the time, being home from school for the summer holidays, and I well recollect his coming in to tea, a meal which we always had with him on Sunday afternoons, and saying, 'Children, I have written you a hymn,' and reading us 'Peace, perfect peace,' in which, from the moment that he wrote it, he never made any alteration."

Translated into many different tongues, "Peace, perfect peace" has gained a position well to the forefront of famous hymns. Not always is the fact noticed that the first line in each verse is in the form of a question, while the second line in each verse gives the answer.

Dr. Edward Henry Bickersteth was born in London on January 25th, 1825. Educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he graduated with honours, he thereafter held various charges, and in 1885 accepted the Bishopric of Exeter in succession to Dr. Temple. Dr. Bickersteth is both hymn writer and poet. He has published several volumes of poems from which about thirty pieces, including that sweet communion hymn "Till He come," have been set to music, and are to be found in various permanent hymnals both in

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this country and America. On May 16th, 1906, he passed away at his home in Paddington, at the advanced age of eighty-one.

To those interested in the absorbing subject of sacred song, the name Inellan displayed at the end of a slender looking pier as you sail down the Clyde, at once associates itself with a famous hymn ; for it was here that Dr. George Matheson wrote "O love, that wilt not let me go," a hymn beloved not only in Scotland, but the world over. Though deprived of his eyesight in his youth, Matheson had a brilliant career as a student at Edinburgh, and became a powerful preacher. Dr. Matheson gives an interesting account of the circumstances under which "O love, that wilt not let me go" was written. "My hymn was composed in the Manse of Innellan on the evening of June 6th, 1882. I was at that time alone. It was the day of my sister's marriage, and the rest of the family were staying overnight in Glasgow. Something had happened to me which was known only to myself, and which caused me the most severe mental suffering. The hymn was the fruit of that suffering. It was the quickest bit of work I ever did in my life. I had the impression rather of having it dictated to me by some inward voice than of working it out myself. I am quite sure that the whole work was completed in five minutes, and equally sure it never received at my hands any retouching or correction." It is said that the severe mental suffering spoken of by Dr. Matheson, had reference to a painful love affair of his which occurred about that time. He died at North Berwick in 1906.

No more appropriate music could have been written for this beautiful hymn than *St. Margaret*, the sublime composition of Dr. A. L. Peace.

I have a vivid recollection when, as a boy, I was

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taken by my father to an organ recital given in Langholm Parish Church, Dumfriesshire, in 1895, about thirteen years after the hymn was written, when the eminent musician thrilled the audience by a performance of his charming composition.

There is an affecting story relating to the writing of "It is well with my soul." Mr. H. G. Spafford, the author of the hymn, was a lawyer in Chicago, and well known as a man engaged in Christian activities. By the foundering of a steamer on which his wife and four children were going to Europe, the latter lost their lives, causing him great sorrow. It was this pathetic circumstance that inspired the grief-stricken father, some time later, to pen this hymn.

"When Mr. Moody and I were holding meetings in Edinburgh, in 1874," said Mr. Sankey, when telling the story, "we heard of the sad news of the loss of the French steamer *Ville de Havre*, on her return from America to France. On board was Mrs. Spafford with her four children. In mid ocean a collision took place with a sailing vessel, causing the steamer to sink in half an hour. Nearly all on board were lost. Mrs. Spafford got her children out of their berths and up on deck. Being told the steamer would soon sink, she knelt down with her children in prayer, and asked God that they might be saved if possible; or made ready to die if it was His will. In a few minutes the vessel sank, and the children were lost. One of the sailors of the vessel—whom I afterwards met in Scotland—while rowing over the spot where the steamer had disappeared, discovered Mrs. Spafford floating in the water. He rescued her, and in ten days she was landed at Cardiff. From there she cabled to her husband the message, 'Saved alone.' Mr. Spafford had the message framed and hung in his office. He

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started immediately for England to bring his wife to Chicago. Mr. Moody left his meetings in Edinburgh and went to Liverpool to try to comfort the bereaved parents, and was greatly pleased they were able to say, ' It is well ; the will of God be done.' "

It was in commemoration of the death of his children, that Mr. Spafford wrote the hymn which has brought comfort to many a troubled heart. This is how it opens :

" When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows, like sea-billows, roll ;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to know,
It is well, it is well with my soul."

CHAPTER V.

The Power of Sacred Song

AMONG the divinely ordained instrumentalities for the conversion and sanctification of the soul that God has given, surely one of the greatest is the singing of “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” Pages might be filled with interesting facts in connection with the use of hymns in the public worship of the House of God. How often have vast audiences been melted and swayed by a simple hymn, when they have been unmoved by a powerful presentation of the Gospel from pulpit and platform.

Looking back over the years that are passed, since, in the language of Horatius Bonar’s charming hymn, the child of God could sing :

“ I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary and worn and sad ;
I found in Him a resting place,
And He has made me glad.”

—does not the memory recall many of the dear old hymns that sung themselves into the heart, and taught the truths of God, that otherwise we might not have learned, and led us to the sources of joy and delight that we might never have found. Even yet we can hear the echo of those voices that used to lead the

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singing in times of spiritual blessing. Some of them, it is true, were poor and cracked and discordant, and would have utterly spoiled and ruined any songs, other than those of the sanctuary, that were sung in those hours of the Spirit's presence and power.

We remember the story of John Wesley and the old Cornish woman, who, at one of his services, annoyed the preacher by persistently singing out of tune. Wesley's trained musical ear could not bear the discordant notes, and he cried out, "You are singing out of tune, my sister!" "But my heart is singing," was the old woman's quick reply. "Then, sing on, my sister," returned John Wesley. And sing she did, for her heart was making melody to the Lord.

We remember, too, the truth of the terse words of Billy Bray, the converted collier, who, in order to encourage the less tuneful members of his congregation, reminded them that God made both the crow and the nightingale, and he delighted to hear the voice of each.

"I was in Barclay church in Edinburgh, the guest of the pastor, during a crowded Thursday evening prayer meeting," once wrote the late Dr. Pentecost. "In deference to the time-honoured custom of the Scotch, a paraphrase of one of David's psalms was announced. The congregation did bravely and well, considering the metre and the melody (?) But after the meeting was formally opened, the book of paraphrases was quietly tucked under the pulpit and one of our favourite hymns called for :

"I hear Thy gentle voice,
That calls me, Lord, to Thee ;
For cleansing in the precious blood
That flowed on Calvary."

In a twinkling, every one whipped out of pocket a

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little penny song book. Every face was radiant, and every voice vocal. The house seemed filled with the Spirit, and every heart seemed to be pouring out its faith and hope to God in the hymn that had probably led many of those present to Christ, and had quickened the faith and hope of all."

The great preacher also relates his experience after leaving his hotel in Glasgow one Sunday evening, to go to Dr. Andrew Bonar's church, some two miles distant. He was but a little way from the church when his ears were greeted with the familiar strains :

" Safe in the arms of Jesus,
Safe on His gentle breast,
There by his love o'ershaded,
Sweetly my soul shall rest."

Looking ahead he saw a crowd from whence came the singing. Pressing forward, the doctor joined the throng of men, women and children, gathered about a faithful band of Christian workers, who were holding a service of song at the street corner. This little company could not preach, in the technical sense of the word, but they could sing the glad Gospel out on the evening air, and thus send forth the glorious invitation, "Come!" Dr. Pentecost was deeply impressed with their simple service, for they were evidently engaging in it as a matter that was to be done unto the Lord. As they passed from the singing of one hymn to another, sometimes slipping in a brief prayer between, he noted the effect on the crowd. Though composed mostly of the rougher element, such as is seen in our larger cities, it was hushed into quiet, and even eager attention to the singing. His attention was called to some faces grown serious and thoughtful as they hearkened to words of love and hope, and more than once he observed the tears stealing down the grim cheek of some sinner

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unused to weep. Thus was God at work in those neglected hearts, and doubtless His great love crept into many a soul through those hymns having been so effectually preached to that class of people.

It was the singing of the hymn :

“ Lord, I hear of showers of blessing
Thou art scattering full and free.”

that reached the heart of a poor outcast when wandering in the paths of sin. This is what she afterwards wrote : “ Thank you for singing that hymn, for it was the singing of it that saved me. I was a lost woman, a wicked mother ; I have stolen, and lied, and been so bad to my dear innocent children. Friendless, I attended your enquiry meeting, but no one came to me because of the crowd. But on Saturday afternoon, when they all sang that hymn together, those beautiful words, “ Blessing others, O bless me,” seemed to reach my very soul. I thought, Jesus can accept me—“ Even me,”—and it brought me to His feet, and I feel the burden of sin removed. Can you wonder that I love those words, and I love to hear them sung ? ”

The verse referred to strikes an unmistakable note of tenderness :

“ Pass me not ; Thy lost one bringing,
Bind my heart, O Lord, to Thee ;
While the streams of life are springing,
Blessing others, oh, bless me—
Even me ! ”

Written by Mrs. Elizabeth Codner, the wife of a clergyman, this hymn was first printed in 1861 as a leaflet. The hymn was suggested to the writer in a remarkable way. A party of young friends over whom she was watching with anxious hope, attended a meeting

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in which details were given of the great spiritual revival in Ireland, in 1860-61. They came back greatly impressed, and Mrs. Codner pressed upon them the privilege and responsibility of getting a share in the outpoured blessing. On the Sunday following, not being well enough to attend her class, she had a time of quiet communion with the Lord. "Those young people were still on my heart," says the author, when telling the story, "and I longed to press upon them an individual appeal. Without effort, words seemed to be given to me, and they took the form of a hymn. I had no thought of sending it beyond the limits of my own circle, but, passing it on to one and another, it became a word of power, and I then published it as a leaflet." Since then Mrs. Codner's hymn has had a wonderful history. It was largely used during the Moody and Sankey mission in this country, is specially popular at evangelistic services everywhere, and has been introduced into most of the modern hymnals for congregational use.

There is a magnetic power in the singing of sacred song in the open-air, as the following simple testimony of a Bluejacket I once met in Edinburgh will show. In the course of our short talk he told me a remarkable story illustrating the wonderful power of song, which wrought so great a change in his life. "Well, it happened this way," said Jack, as he tightened the grip of his little Bible under his arm, and thrust his hands deeper into the wide pockets of his navy blue trousers. "About two years ago when we were stationed at Malta, I became greatly concerned and troubled about my soul's eternal welfare. I knew that were I to die at that time I would be eternally lost, and I tried in vain to banish the thought from my mind; but the more I tried the more I was plunged into misery. This

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went on for some time, till I could endure it no longer ; so one day I resolved to put an end to my soul trouble by getting drunk. With this object in view I sallied forth, but had not gone far when my attention was drawn to singing which proceeded from an open-air meeting that was being held on our garrison island, by a few Christians. I listened, and there came to me the words of the song they sang :

“ Jesus is tenderly calling thee home—
Calling to-day, calling to-day !
Why from the sunshine of love wilt thou roam,
Farther and farther away ? ”

“ For a few moments I seemed to falter, but swift as an arrow came the voice of Satan, ‘ Right ahead ! Quick march ! ’ I was about to march off to a neighbouring public house, but was arrested by the wonderful words of life which came floating through the clear air :

“ Jesus is waiting, oh, come to Him now—
Waiting to-day, waiting to-day !
Come with thy sins, at His feet lowly bow ;
Come, and no longer delay ! ”

“ Going over to where the little band of singers were, I listened as I had never done before. Could it be true, I wondered within myself, that Jesus was waiting and ready to receive me with all my sins ? I could hold myself back no longer, and that night, at the open-air meeting, amid the scoffs and jeers of my shipmates who were loitering around, I knelt down and accepted Christ as my Saviour.” His story told, the young bluejacket bid me a cheery “ Good-night,” as he sped off to some secluded prayer meeting, unashamed to carry under his arm, his Bible and bright red Sankey hymn book.

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How many stories circle round William Cowper's famous hymn, "There is a fountain filled with blood." This hymn was written about the year 1770, and was based on the text : "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. xiii. 1). Friendless, and without a penny in the world, a middle-aged man made his way down Water Street, New York. In his pocket was his sixth dismissal from the United States Navy on the charge of chronic alcoholism. So utterly hopeless and dejected was he, that he turned in the direction of the East River, determined on suicide. As he trudged along he observed a shaft of light streaming from a partly opened door on the other side of the street, and with that light came the strains of the familiar hymn :

"There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins ;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains."

He stopped and listened, and as the hymn proceeded he murmured to himself, "Why, that is the hymn my mother used to sing when I was a youngster. I will go over and see who sings it before I kill myself." He slipped through the swinging doors, and immediately found himself in the midst of about a hundred wrecks of humanity like himself. Jerry McAuley, a popular figure, and the friend of the fallen, was standing before them with open Bible, talking in a loving, familiar way. "Now boys," said he, "if you mean business you may be saved from your sins just where you are. Christ can save a river pirate, a drunkard and a thief, for He saved me." At that moment there came flickering into the mind of the profligate a little ray of hope, and he cried out, "Why, if that's true, I'll try it." At the

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invitation of Jerry he came forward and knelt down at a front seat. Jerry knelt by him and whispered into his ears wonderful words of life. Broken down in spirit, the poor drunkard then and there accepted Christ as his Saviour, and rose to his feet, the shackles of sin for ever broken, a free man.

Of Major Whittle's popular Gospel song, "Come Believing," there is a story told of a lawyer from the West, who had sunk so low as to become a beggar in the streets of New York. Homeless and penniless he stumbled by a mission hall, the windows of which were open, and he stopped a moment to listen to the singing

"Once again the Gospel message
From the Saviour you have heard ;
Will you heed the invitation ?
Will you turn and seek the Lord ? "

He had been brought up in a Christian home, and as he listened to the singing, his past life rose before him. He decided to go in, and as he took his seat the audience was singing the second verse :

"Many summers you have wasted,
Ripened harvests you have seen ;
Winter snows by spring have melted,
Yet you linger in your sin."

The words of the hymn went straight home to his heart, and he realised that what they sang was indeed a true picture of his own wasted life. Then came the third verse which ended :

"While the Spirit now is striving
Yield and seek the Saviour's side."

Broken down, and unable to restrain his emotion, as he pictured his lost condition, the poor man jumped

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to his feet as the hymn closed, and cried out, “ I will yield ; I will seek the Saviour’s side ! ” That night the wanderer found rest and peace for his troubled soul, by believing and trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ, and was happily restored to his wife and children.

It was the singing of Charles Wesley’s hymn :

“ Depth of mercy ! can it be
Mercy still reserved for me ?
Can my God His wrath forbear ?—
Me, the chief of sinners, spare ? ”

that brought about in a wonderful way the conversion of an actress, who was appearing at a theatre in a provincial town. Passing along a quiet street one evening, she heard singing which proceeded from a house, the door of which stood partly open. Attracted by the sweet song, she looked in and there saw a number of people sitting together singing this hymn. For a moment or two she lingered, and when the song finished there followed a simple but earnest prayer. So impressed was the young actress with the hymn, that she procured a book containing it. Seeking the quietude of her room, she read over and over again the words of the hymn she had heard at the cottage meeting. That night she gave her heart to God, and resolved to leave the stage. The manager of the theatre, hearing of her decision, pleaded with her to continue to take the leading part in the play she had made famous in other cities, and eventually she promised to appear on the following night. When the time came, the curtain rose, and the orchestra began to play the accompaniment to the song she was expected to sing. There she stood, facing the great audience, but her thoughts were far away. Supposing that she had become temporarily embarrassed, the band played the prelude over a

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second and third time. Then, with clasped hands, and eyes suffused with tears, she stepped forward, and sang with deep emotion :

“ Depth of mercy ! can it be
Mercy still reserved for me ? ”

And amid a silence, the solemnity of which had never before been experienced in that theatre, the curtain dropped and the performance was brought to a sudden close.

I heard a somewhat similar incident related by the gentleman himself, whose remarkable experience was the means of not only diverting his professional career into another channel, but in entirely transforming his life. While travelling in Australia, he was one evening passing along a quiet street in the town where he was staying, when his attention was suddenly arrested by singing. He was an eminent musician and composer, and accustomed to hearing only the best music the world could produce. What he heard at that moment when brought to a standstill, was not the performance of some classic piece of music, or the latest opera song, but the sweet strain of an old-fashioned hymn :

“ My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine !
For Thee all the pleasures of sin I resign.”

Surely that melody had rung in his heart in days of long ago, and afresh his soul began to drink it in :

“ My gracious Redeemer, my Saviour art Thou !
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now ! ”

Drawn to the spot from whence the singing proceeded, his curiosity was aroused and he entered the humble building. It was a Salvation Army barracks.

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There were but a handful of people, and as he entered they were pouring out their hearts to God in song. The musician remained during the simple service which followed ; he realised for the first time that he was a sinner, and though high in the scale of this world's popularity he must needs come down to the level of those zealous Salvationists. That night he trusted in Jesus, and to-day the name of that convert is known throughout the world. From that little Salvation Army meeting there went out to sing the songs of salvation in almost every country of the globe, the famous preacher musician, Mr. W. H. Jude.

This beautiful and tender little hymn was written in 1858, by a Canadian boy, William Ralph Featherston, when he was only about sixteen years of age. The hymn first appeared in the *London Hymn Book*, without the author's name, and was for many years incorrectly attributed to Dr. A. J. Gordon, who composed the music to which it is sung. Mr. Featherston died in Montreal in 1870, aged twenty-eight. The original copy of the hymn in the author's handwriting, is still a cherished treasure in the family.

Many wonderful instances are on record where the singing of a hymn, wafted from an open-air service, has been the means of arresting more than one wanderer from the paths of sin. By me, as I write, there are two striking testimonies to the power of sacred song, which I received in connection with this subject. One is from a railway guard, who writes : " Standing at the corner of a street, listening to a band of Gospel workers who were singing the hymn :

‘ God is calling the prodigal,’

“ I yielded myself to God and was saved.”

Another railwayman testifies : “ While standing at

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an open-air meeting, under the influence of drink, I heard a converted comedian sing that fine old hymn :

‘ I was once far away from the Saviour,
As vile as a sinner could be,
And I wondered if Christ the Redeemer,
Could save a poor sinner like me.’

“ Realising my sinfulness, and knowing that I was indeed far, far away from God, I decided that from that night I would serve the Lord. Since then I have been kept by the power of God—Hallelujah ! ”

Still another, sent by a London correspondent, from which I take the following : “ On Sunday afternoon we were holding an open-air meeting and were singing the hymn, ‘ Have you any room for Jesus ? ’ When we came to the second verse :

‘ Room for pleasure, room for business ;
But for Christ the crucified—
Not a place that He can enter
In the heart for which He died ? ’

—two men came along on their way to fly pigeons. ‘ Jack,’ said one, as he came near, ‘ that’s me ; room for pleasure, room for business, but no room for Christ. You can fly the pigeons if you like, but I’m not going.’ Bill returned home—if such could be called home—with his pigeons, and coming back soon after, entered the Gospel meeting, at the door of which he had been attracted by the singing. His wife, at a loss to understand what was taking place, followed Bill along the street into the chapel, and sat down beside him. That night, husband and wife found peace by trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ. The home to-day,” continues my

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friend, "is one of the brightest in the great city of London."

Instances could be multiplied, vividly illustrating how the arrow of conviction from the quiver of the Almighty has gone home to the heart of many a wayfarer, by the singing of a hymn or chorus at an open-air service. On the occasion of Sankey's last visit to this country I heard him relate a very impressive incident. When Moody and Sankey returned to America after their first visit to Great Britain, their first meeting was held on a Sunday, in front of the old Congregational church in the village of Northfield, Mr. Moody's home, the building being too small to accommodate the great numbers who had come to hear the evangelists. It was on this occasion that Sankey sang his famous hymn, "The Ninety and Nine," from the steps of the church, which was the means of the conversion of a man who heard him singing it across the Connecticut River, quite half a mile away. He had refused to attend the service, and was quite angry because his family and neighbours had all gone to the meeting. It was a calm summer evening when the song was sung, and Mr. Sankey, sitting at his small cabinet organ, with the church behind him acting as a sounding board to send his voice so great a distance, rang out that impressive story of the lost sheep so clearly and distinctly, that the man sitting on his doorstep on the opposite bank of the river, caught the message of the song, awakening him to the fact that he was one of the lost sheep, and that the Good Shepherd was seeking him. Two weeks later he was led to attend a meeting at a small school-house near his home, with the result that the lost one was found and brought into the fold. He removed to Northfield and became an active member of the church, from the steps of which the sweet song was sung that

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reached his heart. Some years afterwards at the laying of the corner stone of the new Congregational church, at Northfield, Mr. Moody requested Mr. Sankey to stand on the corner stone and sing once more "The Ninety and Nine," as he hoped that the new church would be one whose mission it would be to seek the lost ones. "While I was singing," said Mr. Sankey, "Mr. Caldwell, the man who had heard the song across the river, lay dying in his cottage, which stood not far from the new church. Calling his wife to his bedside, he asked her to open the south window, as he thought he heard singing. Together they listened to the same song which had been used to lead him into the way of life." Surely a remarkable coincidence, and one that must have awakened in the mind and heart of the dying man, very precious memories.

How often have there been wonderful cases of conversion from the singing of some old-fashioned hymn, heard under peculiar circumstances and in unexpected places. One striking instance happened during the Crimean War. It was during a period when our soldiers were passing through days of bitter hardship. In the life of Duncan Matheson, the Scottish evangelist, who so faithfully ministered to the spiritual welfare of the men, we read that one night, weary and sad, returning from Sebastopol to the old stable at Balaclava, where he lodged, his strength gone, sickened with the sights he had seen, depressed by the thought that the siege seemed no nearer an end, so, trudging along in mud knee-deep, he looked up and noticed the stars shining calmly in the clear sky. Instinctively his weary heart mounted heavenward, thinking of "the rest that remaineth for the people of God," and began to sing aloud :

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“ How bright those glorious spirits shine !
Whence all their white array ?
How come they to the blissful seats
Of everlasting day ?
Lo ! these are they from sufferings great,
Who came to realms of light,
And in the blood of Christ have washed,
Those robes which shine so bright.”

Next day, though wet and stormy, he went out and came upon a soldier in rags, standing under an old verandah for shelter ; his naked toes were showing through worn-out boots. Matheson, speaking words of encouragement, gave him half a sovereign to purchase shoes. The soldier thanked him and said : “ I am not what I was yesterday. Last night as I was thinking of our miserable condition, I grew tired of life, and said to myself. . . . I can bear this no longer, and may as well put an end to it. So I took my musket and went down yonder in a desperate state, about eleven o’clock ; but as I got round the point, I heard some person singing, ‘ How bright those glorious spirits shine ; ’ and I remembered the old tune and the Sabbath school where we used to sing it. I felt ashamed of being so cowardly, and said : Here is somebody as badly off as myself, and yet he is not giving in. I felt, too, he had something to make him happy which I had not, but I began to hope I might too, get the same happiness. I returned to my tent, and to-day I am resolved to seek the one thing.” “ Do you know who the singer was ? ” asked the evangelist. “ No,” was the reply. “ Well,” said the other, “ it was I.” Tears rushed into the soldier’s eyes, and handing back the half sovereign, he said : “ Never, sir, can I take it from you after what you have been the means of doing for me.”

Charles Wesley’s immortal hymn, “ Jesus, Lover of my soul,” has almost since its birth, two hundred years ago, been the centre of countless stories, but few are

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more impressive than that told by a lady who formed one of a party of tourists on board an excursion steamer, which sailed down the Potomac River in America, one lovely summer evening in the early eighties. There was on board a gentleman who delighted the passengers gathered on deck by the happy rendering of some of the old hymns so much beloved the world over. He had just finished singing "Jesus, Lover of my soul," having given the first two verses with much feeling and a peculiar emphasis upon the concluding lines, which thrilled the hearts of every one present, when, for a few seconds a profound hush fell upon all on deck, as the vessel moved slowly through the waters. Presently, from the outskirts of the crowd, a gentleman pressed forward to the side of the singer :

" Beg your pardon, stranger," he said, " were you actively engaged in the late war ? "

" Yes, sir," the man of song courteously replied, " I fought under General Grant."

" Well," said the first speaker, " I did my fighting on the other side, and I think—indeed, am quite sure—I was very near you one bright night eighteen years ago this very month. It was a night such as this. If I am not mistaken, you were on guard duty. We, of the South, had sharp business on hand, and you were one of the enemy. I crept near your post of duty, my murderous weapon in my hand ; the shadows hid me. As you paced back and forth you were humming the tune of the hymn you have just sung. I raised my gun and aimed at your heart ; but at that moment there rang the words :

" Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of Thy wing."

" Your prayer was answered. I couldn't fire after that, and there was no attack made upon your camp

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that night. I felt sure, when I heard you sing this evening, that you were the man whose life I was spared from taking."

As the Southerner finished, the singer, visibly touched, grasped the outstretched hand of the other, and said with much emotion : " I remember that night very well, and also the feeling of depression and loneliness with which I went forth to duty. I knew my post was one of great danger, and I was more dejected than I remember to have been at any other time during my military service. I paced my lonely beat, thinking of home and friends, and all that life holds dear. Then the thought of God's care for all that He had created came to me with peculiar force. If He could so care for the sparrow, how much more for man created in His own image ! With this comforting thought, I sang the prayer of my heart and ceased to feel lonely. How that prayer was answered I never knew until this evening."

Few stories demonstrating the wonderful power of sacred song are more remarkable and inspiring than what has been recorded of the famous hymn :

" All hail the power of Jesus' name ! "

A missionary stationed in India, met one day in the village street, a strange-looking native, who proved to belong to an interior tribe, living in barbarism, entirely ignorant of the Gospel. On hearing that no one had yet carried the " Good News " to this isolated tribe, a desire filled his soul to obey the Lord's command : " Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." Though his friends tried to persuade him not to go alone, he was determined to go and tell these savages of " Jesus and His love." Soon after

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reaching the habitation of the tribe, the savages immediately surrounded him, armed with spears, in a threatening attitude. The missionary could not speak their language, but felt that Christ was with him, and, closing his eyes in silent prayer for protection, he raised his violin—which he invariably carried with him—and began to sing and play :

“ All hail the power of Jesus’ name,
 Let angels prostrate fall ;
 Bring forth the royal diadem,
 And crown Him Lord of All ! ”

With eyes still closed he continued to lift his heart and voice in song, and on reaching the verse :

“ Let every kindred, every tribe,
 On this terrestrial ball,
 To Him all majesty ascribe,
 And crown Him Lord of all ! ”

He opened his eyes, and found the scene completely changed. Every spear was lowered, the warriors made signs, took the stranger to their huts, and gave him food and shelter. The singing of the hymn, though the savages could understand not a word, touched the hearts of those uncivilised tribesmen in a wonderful way, and was the means in God’s hands, of opening the door for the preaching of the Gospel in that dark region.

“ All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name,” was written by Edward Perronet, about the year 1780, and first appeared in the *Gospel Magazine*. The tune, by W. Shrubsole, is as famous as the hymn itself, and was written about the same time as the words, receiving its name “ Miles Lane ” from the chapel in Miles Lane, London, where Shrubsole was for many years organist.

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But the words of Perronet's hymn have inspired many a composer since Shrubsole's setting first appeared. "Diadem" is an old tune that is still sung with great heartiness and fervour. It had its origin in a typical Lancashire village named Droylsden, about three miles east of Manchester. Nearly a century ago the majority of the inhabitants divided their time between hand-loom weaving and hat-making in the daytime, and singing and practicing their instruments in the evening in preparation for the next Sunday's services at the Wesleyan chapel. In 1837 the leader of the choir was a young musical enthusiast named James Ellor, then in his eighteenth year. Under his fostering care the services acquired more than a local reputation, and when anything special was advertised to take place, people came from far and near to attend the performance of Ellor's famous village choir. The young choir-leader was always on the look-out for something fresh, and one day in 1838, he went into a neighbour's workshop and, flourishing a piece of music paper in his hand, called out, "Look here, lads! What d'ye think o' this?" "This" was a piece of new music! The men wiped their hands and the old ones put on their glasses and, crowding round Ellor, promptly "solfa'd" the new tune over two or three times. "That's good, lad," said one, "an' where d'ye get it from?" "It's aht o' my own yed, an' it goes to 'Crown Him Lord of All,' and we'll have it next anniversary," said James, all in a breath.

Such was the birth of this popular tune, and as the anniversary drew near, Ellor made copies of the various parts for the players. These took their copies away with them, and thus the tune got spread about, until within a very short time "Diadem" became the leading feature at all anniversaries for miles round. Ellor subsequently gave up hat-making, and got em-

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ployment on the new railway then being constructed between Manchester and Godley Junction. In 1843 he conducted his last anniversary, and shortly afterwards emigrated to America. Little is known of him during his later years, except that he worked for some time at his old occupation of hat-making. For many years before his death he was nearly blind. James Ellor died in 1899, in his eightieth year.

Described by James Montgomery as one of the finest hymns in our language, "Jerusalem, my happy home," has been a favourite almost since its birth in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The version by David Dickson, a native of Edinburgh, is perhaps the most beloved ; snatches of which might often be heard in days gone by, not only among the hills and glens of Scotland, but in lands beyond the seas. A young Scotsman lay dying in America, and a Presbyterian minister of Scottish parentage, who happened to be in the vicinity, was called to his bedside. On his arrival, the good man observing that the end was not far distant, and learning that the poor fellow was not prepared to die, tenderly laid his hand on the brow of the sufferer, and sought to point him to the Saviour. But the more he endeavoured to accomplish his object, the more determined appeared the dying man to thwart all the good man's efforts to reach his heart. After many attempts, the minister, almost in despair, left the bedside, walked toward the window, and half unconsciously began to sing :

" Jerusalem, my happy home,
Name ever dear to me :
When shall my labours have an end
In joy, and peace, and Thee ? "

This effectually attracted the attention of the dying

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Scotsman. A tender chord had been touched, and with a quivering voice he cried out, “ My dear mither used tae sing that hymn.” His softened spirit was now upon his Redeemer, and bursting into tears he acknowledged his sinfulness and enquired the way of salvation—which it was hoped he indeed found. Many years had passed away since he had heard that hymn sung in far away Scotland ; but its words recalled all the scenes and feelings of home, and produced results which, it is probable, that mother had never thought of.

CHAPTER VI.

Hymns Sung in Tragic Moments

STRANGE indeed are the places in which hymns have been sung. In divers perils, and under tragic circumstances, have people derived consolation and courage in times of need by lifting up their hearts in sacred song.

A few hours before the heroic Nurse Cavell was executed, she was visited by Mr. Gahan, the British chaplain. Having read to her a portion of Scripture, and commended the brave woman into God's gracious keeping, she joined him in repeating Lyte's hymn, "Abide with me." As he said good-bye, she smiled, and said, "We shall meet again; 'Heaven's morn shall break, and earth's vain shadows flee.' "

Lord Kitchener ordered this hymn to be sung at the thanksgiving service at Khartoum, to commemorate the victory of Omdurman, and to acclaim that country for Christianity. When, during the Great War, Lord Allenby took Jerusalem without firing a single shot, "Abide with me" was afterwards sung amid impressive scenes.

A beautiful story comes from Uganda, during the violent persecutions of the Christians there. Some of the native lads were taken by their enemies, and after inflicting dreadful torture they bound them to a scaffold, under which a fire was kindled. As the flames and smoke gradually rose they were cruelly mocked by

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their persecutors, but through it all the brave Christian lads clung with great tenacity to their faith, and with their latest breath they lifted up their voices to God in the sweet hymns the good missionaries had taught them to sing.

When the Armenian Christians were being brutally massacred by the Turks, we are told that they sang a translation of "Rock of Ages."

It is also related that Bishop Marvin, wandering homeless in Arkansas, during the American Civil War, found himself marvellously cheered when in the wilderness he overheard a widowed old woman singing, "Nearer, my God to Thee," in the midst of a dilapidated log cabin.

Another incident of the Civil War, also relating to this hymn, concerns a little drummer boy who lay dying on the battlefield of Fort Donelson. The poor lad had lost an arm, and as his life-blood ebbed away, he was heard to raise his voice as he sang his favourite hymn, rendering with his latest breath :

" Nearer, my God to Thee,
 Nearer to Thee ;
E'en though it be a cross
 That raiseth me ! "

Possibly the most tragic incident associated with this hymn occurred in the spring of 1912, when the *Titanic*, "that greatest of all ships, so glorious in strength and beauty," sank in mid Atlantic, with the loss of over sixteen hundred lives. Of the awful calamity which befell the mighty monarch of the deep, on that ill-fated Sunday morning, much has been written ; but through the dimness of time's fog the vision of that mighty ship remains. Faintly there appear the lights gleaming across the dark waters, tier above tier, street above street. Ever and anon might be heard gay

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music from her decks, and the laughter of women borne lightly on the wind. Then suddenly there is heard the sound of a dreadful shock, the ripping of steel plates by a hidden iceberg, the stagger of that mighty vessel as she receives her death-blow. Then there comes the last plunge forward, the cries of agony in one awful chorus of despair, as the great floating city disappears into the ocean's dark abyss. Amid that awful scene, there remains vividly portrayed in the memory an event which will always be associated with this dreadful catastrophe. When hope of salvation began to wane, in order to avoid a panic even at the last, the heroic bands-men assembled on deck and played lively tunes to buoy up the spirits of the passengers. But, as the last moments of that great and mighty sea monster drew nigh, and when all hope of salvation had vanished, there was a pause in the music, then out in the clear air of that fatal Sunday morning, there arose to heaven the plaintive strains of that immortal hymn, "Nearer, my God, to Thee, Nearer to Thee!" It is not generally known that the person who suggested the hymn was the Rev. John Harper, of Walworth Baptist Church, London. He was on his way to America with his daughter. It is said that he got together a number of passengers who knelt with him in prayer as the vessel sank, and at his request the band struck up the sweet and familiar hymn. A sailor who was present, and was afterwards rescued, told the story of the good minister whose name was then unknown.

"Nearer, my God, to Thee," was a great favourite of President McKinley, and as he lay dying by the hand of an assassin, he was heard to sing faintly the words of that beautiful hymn. It was also a favourite of our late King Edward, who once wrote: "Among serious hymns, there is none more touching nor one that goes more truly to the heart than 'Nearer, my God, to

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Thee ! ” This hymn was written by Sarah Adams, the daughter of a couple who first met in Newgate Gaol, where her father had been sent to lie for six months for defending the French Revolution, and criticising the political conduct of a certain Bishop Watson.

A remarkable story is related by one of the Fisk University singers, who was on board the ill-fated steamer *Seawanhaka*, when she took fire. Driven by the flames, he, along with the greater number of passengers, flung himself into the sea. Swimming to where his wife was struggling in the water, he bade her place her hands firmly on his shoulders, while he endeavoured to reach some wreckage to which they might cling. This, his wife did until almost exhausted, she murmured, “ I can hold on no longer ! ” “ Try a little longer,” was the response of the wearied and agonized husband ; “ let us sing ‘ Rock of Ages.’ ” And as the sweet strains floated over the turbulent waters, it was heard by the sinking and dying. One after another they raised their heads above the sullen waves, joining a feeble effort in this sweet pleading prayer :

“ Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.”

As the song rose, their strength was renewed ; another and yet another received fresh courage. And now in the distance could be seen a boat approaching. Could they hold out till it arrived ? Still they sang ; and ere long, with superhuman strength, laid hold of the life-boat, upon which they were borne in safety to land. The survivor, who was inspired in those desperate moments to sing the prayer of his heart, believes that Toplady’s “ Rock of Ages ” saved many another besides himself and his wife.

Charles Wesley’s well-known hymn, “ Jesus, Lover

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of my soul," has also proved a source of comfort and consolation under similar circumstances. The *Ocean Queen* was wrecked in the English Channel, and a steamer cruising along in the darkness soon after heard the sound of singing coming across the water. The tune was familiar, and they could faintly catch the words :

" Jesus, Lover of my soul,
 Let me to Thy bosom fly,
 While the nearer waters roll,
 While the tempest still is high ;
 Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
 Till the storm of life is past ;
 Safe into the haven guide ;
 Oh, receive my soul at last."

The captain bore his vessel down in the direction from whence came the singing, and presently an object was observed in the sea. As he approached, the captain discovered it was a woman with a child hugged to her breast, clinging to some wreckage belonging to the ill-fated ship in which she had sailed, and he immediately lowered a boat. Guided by the singing, which now and again almost died away, the sailors soon reached the brave woman, who, with death's dark waters all around, was singing her song of trust to her faithful Lord and God.

In the summer of 1912, the sailing ship *Criccieth Castle*, of Carnarvon, met with disaster off Cape Horn, the most southerly point of South America, and the crew had to abandon the ship. The captain, his wife, and four-year-old son, the second officer, and thirteen of the crew got into the large lifeboat, while the other officers and men left in a smaller boat, which was never again heard of. The weather was intensely cold, and owing to a bad leak in the boat there was never less than eighteen inches of water in it, although some

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of the men were continually baling it out. For the last seven days of that awful journey of two hundred miles to the Falkland Islands they were entirely without food, and six men died. One night, when all hope seemed gone, one of the starving sailors suddenly burst into a hymn :

“ Light in the darkness, sailor, day is at hand !
See o'er the foaming billows fair Haven's land,
Drear was the voyage, sailor, now almost o'er ;
Safe within the lifeboat, sailor, pull for the shore ! ”

Its effect was magical. The exhausted men, still toiling doggedly at the oars with what strength remained to them, sat bolt upright as the first few notes floated out over the silent waste of waters. The hymn inspired them, put new heart into them, and they bent to their work again with hope rekindled in their breasts. Every night, until land was reached, the sailor sang the hymn to cheer his comrades. It was an old hymn, written in the language of the sea, urging all voyagers on the sea of life to get a passage in the lifeboat of salvation, so as to ensure a safe journey to the shores of the Better Land. The refrain is specially appropriate and inspiring :

“ Pull for the shore, sailor ; pull for the shore !
Heed not the rolling waves, but bend to the oar ;
Safe in the lifeboat, sailor, cling to self no more ;
Leave the poor old stranded wreck, and pull for the
shore ! ”

P. P. Bliss is the writer of both words and music of this hymn, which, because of its nautical appeal, has always been a special favourite amongst mission workers in our various sea ports. It would, no doubt, be in this connection that the sailor who sang the song to cheer the sinking spirits of his shipmates first heard the

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joyful melody. The following narrative suggested the writing of the hymn : " We watched the wreck with great anxiety. The lifeboat had been out some hours, but could not reach the vessel through the great breakers that raged and foamed on the sandbank. The boat appeared to be leaving the crew to perish. But in a few minutes the captain and sixteen sailors were taken off, and the vessel went down.

" ' When the lifeboat came to you, did you expect it had brought some tools to repair your old ship ? ' " I asked one of the rescued men.

" ' Oh, no, she was a total wreck. Two of her masts were gone, and if we had stayed mending her only a few minutes, we must have gone down, sir. ' "

" ' When once off the old wreck, and safe in the lifeboat, ' " I continued, " ' What remained for you to do ? ' "

" ' Nothing, sir, ' " was the ready reply, " ' but just to pull for shore. ' "

How the singing of hymns did indeed soothe the savage breasts of a cruel band of Chinese brigands, who had captured and imprisoned a number of our missionaries, was told by Mr. R. W. Porteous at a special meeting recently held in the Kingsway Hall, London, under the auspices of the China Inland Mission. Roped together, the unfortunate missionaries were compelled to march for miles along a rough mountainous road till they reached one of the brigands' strongholds, into which Mr. Porteous and his wife were flung. " We were not anticipating death, " said Mr. Porteous, " but the joy and glory beyond it. Then one of the guards brought me my concertina, and asked me to play it. The thumb-straps had been taken off ; but after tying it up with tape and string I managed to play them some tunes ; and then they asked us to sing to

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them. Together we stood there, my wife and I, well knowing that at any moment the order for our execution might be carried out, and we sang :

‘ Some day the silver cord will break,
And I no more as now shall sing ;
But oh, the joy when I shall wake
Within the palace of the King ! ’ ’

One moonlight night, soon after, they were taken out to a lonely spot on a hill. “ This is the place,” said the officer, and one of the brigands who carried the executioner’s knife took it down from his shoulder. “ We stood looking up at the stars,” said Mr. Porteous, as he told the story, “ and God’s peace came into our hearts, and we could not restrain ourselves from singing praise to Him. We sang :

‘ Face to face shall I behold Him,
Far beyond the starry sky ;
Face to face in all His glory,
I shall see Him by and by.’ ’

One of the officers in charge turned to the native prisoners and said, “ Listen to these foreigners singing. *They* are not afraid to die.” “ We do not know,” continued Mr. Porteous, “ whether it was the singing that touched the hearts of the guards and kept them from carrying out their threat to kill us, but we do know it was the restraining hand of God.” They were preserved that night, and after five weeks’ close confinement were miraculously released.

Though more than a decade has passed since the days when Europe was rent from corner to corner with the ravages of the Great War, there are still echoes of those dark days, when, amid the thunder of guns, could be heard the singing of our gallant lads. Songs they had ; and yet in the hour when facing death, how often

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would rise to their lips the hymns they learned at Sunday school or in the old home. How the singing of a simple chorus at a critical moment gave new strength and courage, was told by a young R.A.M.C. officer. It happened during one of the landings of our men at Gallipoli. Detachments had landed and were scaling the rocks, when the Turks attacked in overwhelming force. The confusion was appalling, and to add to the difficulties of the situation, the British battleships could not support their comrades for fear of mowing as many of them down as the enemy. The seamen, with perspiration pouring down their faces at the agony of restraint, stood to their guns, longing to fire, and yet unable to do so. They could see their brave comrades fighting and falling, now gaining, now losing, and yet they dared not send off a single shell to defend them. Then from somewhere a voice rang out, in the words of the well-known chorus :

“ For you I am praying,
I’m praying for you.”

It was instantly caught up and rolled out till the volume of song reached the fighting men on shore, and all at once a change was seen. The men drew together with a firmer front, and succeeded in pressing back the enemy. Now came the sailors’ longed-for opportunity, and the guns immediately belched forth from all the ships. One terribly wounded boy afterwards gave his testimony that the chorus, which some unknown voice had struck up amid the din of battle, had helped him in a perfectly wonderful way, and how it had penetrated the deafening noise, giving new strength and courage. In spite of having both legs shot away, this young hero smiled bravely, and whilst his wounds were being dressed, he could only speak of all that the chorus had

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meant to him and many others, during those terrible moments.

How often during the great struggle, has the plaintive strain of Newman's famous hymn, "Lead, kindly Light," been heard, under strange and touching circumstances. At the battle of the Marne, two comrades took part in an attack upon the enemy trenches, when one of them—a fine Christian lad—was mortally wounded, and as he lay in the trenches dying, he sang that hymn through. "And as I lay at his side, firing at the advancing Germans," said his comrade—who afterwards told the story—"it seemed as if the angels in heaven were listening. I can never forget the feelings I had. The last verse seemed to rise and rise until it flooded the trenches. Strength was given him to sing in his last moments as he had never sung before."

And what was the verse ?

" So long Thy power hath blessed be, sure it still
 Will lead me on,
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
 The night is gone ;
And with the morn those angel faces smile
 Which I have loved long since and lost awhile."

The brave soldier lad had greeted his loved ones in the midst of battle. He died singing and entered the land of cloudless love. The night had gone, death was swallowed up in victory.

A chaplain, who accompanied the British Expeditionary Force to the Balkans, gives a thrilling account of the remarkable change which suddenly came over the assembled troops on board a large transport, when, in the darkness of the night, some of the lads struck up an old-fashioned hymn. "The night before we landed at Salonica," he writes, "we arranged a great farewell concert on board the transport. Two

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thousand five hundred officers and men, including the general and the ship's captain, were present. We were anchored in what, perhaps, is the most beautiful bay in the world. During the day we had feasted our eyes on the wonderful old world city, with its minarets, spires, palaces, and monasteries. We had gazed at the golden sunset, and the purple mountain ranges of the Balkans, and we wanted to sing. The programme was of a varied character, and had to be carried out in the darkness, as no lights were allowed. We had some wonderful talent on board. A choir of Welsh soldiers sang in a remarkable manner 'The Comrades' Song of Hope,' and 'Land of My Fathers.' They thrilled us, but they did something more—they inspired our souls and lifted us to heaven. I asked them to sing again, and Welshmen are as a rule deeply religious and love hymns. They did not respond with any rollicking chorus, but sang the grand old hymn :

' There's a land that is fairer than day,
And by faith we can see it afar,
For the Father waits over the way,
To prepare us a dwelling place there.
In the sweet . . . by and by . . .
We shall meet on that beautiful shore.'

"Can I describe the effect ? Impossible ! A solemn hush stole over the ship—a silence which grips the soul. You could feel the influence of heaven at work. Here were over two thousand weary travellers, thousands of miles from home, and they were thinking of dear ones left behind. Would they ever return to the old village ? Would they ever see their loved ones again ? Many, alas, never ; but, stealing over the waters of the Eastern ocean, and echoing over the old mountains of Serbia and Greece, was a hymn that possibly had never before been sung in those parts, and it gave just the message

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those brave, and yet troubled lads of ours wanted. What if they should fall in battle, and be buried in a strange land ? To those whose trust for salvation was in Christ there would be a glad reunion some day, in the sweet by and by, in that heaven of love where all sorrow and parting would be over. The General, a fine Christian, gave the lads a parting message, and good seed was sown. How all this would have rejoiced the hearts of St. Paul and his followers, the ancient Thessalonians ! The apostle carried to those parts the message of life after death through the resurrection of our Lord from the dead, and two thousand years afterwards British soldier lads, on their way to take part in a great struggle, sing of the same hope on the eve of their landing. Wonderful and inspiring thought ! ”

One night, a crowd of our soldier boys in France had gathered together in one of the army huts of the Christian Soldiers' Association, at a rest camp behind the British lines. Tired and hungry after a long and trying spell in the trenches, many of the lads were seated about, enjoying a brimming cup of freshly made tea, while others had sought a secluded spot to read, or to write a letter to loved ones at home. Suddenly, amid the babel of voices there came three short, sharp blasts of the sentry's whistle, the signal for “ Lights out,” and almost immediately could be heard the distant whirr of approaching enemy aircraft. In a moment the hut was cleared—all but about a dozen Christian young fellows, who remained where they were. “ I happened to be seated at the piano when we were plunged into darkness,” said my friend, when telling me the story, “ and as I heard the bombs dropped in quick succession, carrying death on every hand, my fingers instinctively trembled over the keys, as I softly sang the prayer that rose to my lips :

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‘ Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee :
Leave, oh leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me :
All my trust on Thee is stayed,
All my help from Thee I bring ;
Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of Thy wing.’

“At the first note, my companions joined in the singing of that verse from Charles Wesley’s immortal hymn, which long before that dreadful hour had proved a comfort and solace to countless thousands. We then knelt down and committed ourselves into the safe keeping of our Heavenly Father.”

Thus, through that dark hour, that little band of soldiers were wonderfully preserved from harm, while many of their less fortunate comrades who had taken refuge elsewhere were killed. Amongst them was the poor sentry nearby, who, but a few minutes before had sounded the alarm.

In the year 1894, the gallant Major Wilson, with a reconnoitring party of thirty-three troopers, were suddenly attacked in Matabeleland by a horde of three thousand natives, who surrounded them in a forest. They fought from early morning till after mid-day. Early in the engagement all their horses had been killed, and behind their dead bodies the brave fellows kept up a desperate fight for several hours, till their ammunition was exhausted and there was not one man left to stand or fire.

When nearly all were wounded or killed, the Induna, in relating the incident, says that Wilson’s party took off their hats, and sang something, the kind of song he had heard missionaries sing to the natives. Soon only one man was left, but the Matabele had such a dread of them, that even then they did not rush in and assegai

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them until the last man had fallen. And so impressed were Lobengula's warriors with the bravery of the white men, that when at last they did scramble over the human barricade, they did not mutilate them in any way. It was of this incident that Mary Georges wrote :

“ They sang—the white men sang—
Sang in the face of death,
And the forest echoes rang
With their triumphant breath.”

I have not been able to discover what it was that those gallant men sang in the hour of death—possibly it may never be known. We are told it was the kind of song the missionaries sang to the natives, and our thoughts instinctively hover round some of the grand old hymns, which have come to us from generation to generation : hymns whose melody has haunted the ear amid the storm and stress of life's long battle.

Incidents associated with the lifting of the voice in sacred song in strange and tragic moments, whether in the field of battle, or on the high seas, have always a glamour of romance, which never fails to rivet the circumstance on the mind, in a peculiar and ineffaceable way. There are, however, in the quiet moments of everyday life, frequent incidents no less fascinating, and worthy of sympathetic note. A touching story was related to me quite recently. A young man suffering from cancer was about to undergo an operation in one of our large Scottish infirmaries. When the surgeon had made a careful examination he discovered that the disease was so deeply rooted that the only hope of saving the life of the patient was the removal of his tongue. The young man was already in the operating theatre, when the surgeon, in a tender and sympathetic way, explained to the sufferer that even though the operation should be successful, he would never again

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be able to speak, and he was asked whether there was anything he wished to say before the operation commenced. For a moment a shadow crossed the brow of the young Christian, at the thought that he would never again be able to testify in song or speech for the Master whom he loved. But soon the shadow passed, and a smile lit up his face. He sat up, and lifting up his voice he sang the hymn :

“ There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.”

Ere the third verse was reached, not an eye of those who stood round was dry. How he sang ; for his heart was in the song. Then came the last verse :

“ Then in a nobler, sweeter song
I’ll sing Thy power to save,
When this poor lisping, stammering tongue
Lies silent in the grave.”

The anaesthetic was administered, the operation performed, but, alas, the patient never regained consciousness ; thus his last song on earth would be his first in heaven.

CHAPTER VII.

Children's Songs

“ Give me a bairnie’s hymn,
For I want no earthly lore,
But the sweet refrain of some childlike strain,
On the brink of Canaan’s shore.

* * * * *

Give me a bairnie’s hymn ;
I feel like a child to-night,
Lying down to rest on its father’s breast,
To awake at morning light.”

THESE verses, from a poem by Mrs. Battersby, which appeared in the *Sunday School Teacher*, in 1874, were suggested by a request for a “bairn’s hymn” by Dr. Guthrie, the preacher-philanthropist, as he lay on his death-bed. And it is said that the simple strain soothed and strengthened him during his last moments. Not infrequently these tender melodies, among the first that infant voices learn to lisp, are often among the last whispered by dying saints in their latest hour. With most of us, some of our earliest religious awakenings were in connection with hymns sung at the Sunday school. How often a little hymn would quiet us, and beget within the heart a seriousness and longing ! And yet we have not infrequently heard those who wholly understand and appreciate the type of music commonly

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termed classic, ridicule a certain class of hymns and tunes, altogether forgetting that these very compositions may exert on other minds a holy and happy influence.

A clergyman was one day busily engaged in his study, when a rough looking man, apparently under the influence of drink, very unceremoniously entered and handed him a note, which he said was from the teacher of the infant class of the Sunday school. The note informed the clergyman that the bearer was the father of one of her scholars who had met with an accident, and that the child lived in such a locality that the teacher dare not visit. "What is your name, and where do you live?" asked the good man. "My name is Peter O'More," answered the other, with a rough Irish brogue, "and I live on an ould canal boat at the foot of Harrison Street."

"And what is the matter with your child?"

"Och! and is it Kitty, my own little darling Kitty, the only child of six that has been born till me? She was playing about on a ship where I was to wark, and she fell down the hatchway and broke her leg, and poor Kitty's leg is not set right, your riverence, for I have no money to pay a docther. Och! poor Kitty! and I've nothing to give her to ate, your riverence."

The minister went down and found a dreadful state of things. The poor little suffering child was overjoyed to see him, whom she at once recognised. She lay upon the "locker" or side seat of an old canal boat, which had been laid up for the winter. There was no fire, though it was a bitterly cold day, no food, and scarcely any article of furniture or any comfort whatever. The minister did what he could to relieve the wants of the little sufferer. The parents had both been drunk the previous night, and in a quarrel had unintentionally knocked the child off the seat, and broken the limb again after it had been set. Having

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obtained the services of a surgeon who again set the limb, the good man sat down on the locker to talk to little Kitty, while he fed her with some nourishing food which he had procured. He asked her if she could read. "No," she could not read a word; "but I can sing something I learned in the Sunday School," said she.

"Well, what can you sing, Kitty?"

In a moment her sweet voice broke out:

"There is a happy land,
Far, far away,
Where saints in glory stand,
Bright, bright as day,
O how they sweetly sing
'Worthy is our Saviour King!'
Loud let His praises ring,
Praise, praise for aye."

Tears gathered in the listener's eyes as the sweet song was lisped by the little sufferer.

"Well, Kitty, that is beautiful. Where do you think that Happy Land is?" he asked.

"Oh," came the ready reply, "I suppose it is up in the sky, where God is and where the angels live."

"Do you think you will ever go there, Kitty?"

"If I'm good, and love God, I think I shall."

Poor Kitty could not read, nor could either of her parents. She knew nothing of heaven and divine things, except what she had been taught at the Sunday School; and most of what she remembered was associated with such words and sentiments as we have quoted. Eternity alone will unfold the power of such simple truth, and simple yet sweet tunes, upon infant minds.

"There is a Happy Land," was one of the "bairns' hymns" called for by Dr. Guthrie. How this little hymn came into being is an interesting story.

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In 1838, when Andrew Young, at that time head-master of Niddry Street School, Edinburgh, was on a visit to Rothesay, he happened to spend an evening at the home of one of his pupils, when the lady of the house entertained her visitor by playing several musical compositions on the piano. Among these was a sweet and tender air which charmed him exceedingly. It was a simple little Indian melody called "Happy Land," and Mr. Young, who was passionately fond of music, requested his friend to play it over and over again. As he listened to the music, he remarked that such a melody would make a capital children's hymn if wedded to appropriate words. All that night the melody kept ringing in his ears. Early in the morning he rose, and walking in the garden, wrote the hymn which has since spread over all the world.

Many beautiful tributes to "There is a Happy Land" have been recorded. "One day Thackeray, the novelist, was passing through a London slum, and heard a few ragged children in a gutter singing something. He stopped to listen. It was 'There is a Happy Land.' The contrast between the squalor of the poor waifs and the splendour of the subject of their song struck him so forcibly that he burst into tears." The Rev. J. C. Carrick, of Newbattle, writing in *Life and Work*, in 1890, mentions having had a letter from Mr. Young—only a week before his death—in which he said: "I have just noticed that in Dr. Paton's most interesting book on his missionary labours, there is a notice how a chief was converted through my hymn.

One of the most widely known and best loved of all children's hymns is :

"There's a Friend for little children,
Above the bright blue sky ;
A Friend who never changes,
Whose love can never die.

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Unlike our friends by nature,
Who change with changing years,
This Friend is always worthy,
The precious name He bears."

It was written by Albert Midlane, on February 27th, 1859, at Newport, Isle of Wight, and first appeared in a children's periodical edited by C. H. Mackintosh, under the title, "Above the bright blue sky." The hymn at once attained great popularity. To-day it has found its way into almost every corner of the world, and has been translated into nearly fifty languages. The first line, as originally published, read, "There's a rest for little children," the word "Friend" being substituted later. Mr. Midlane commenced writing when he was in his teens, his first contribution to hymnody, "God bless our Sunday School," which was sung to the tune of the National Anthem, appeared on May 24th, 1844.

"There's a Friend for little children" was written in a house, practically within a stone's throw from the home of Thomas Binney, who wrote the well-known hymn "Eternal light, eternal light." In his boyhood days, Albert Midlane was brought into close touch with Binney, from whom he may have received some encouragement and impetus in his poetical pursuits. In this connection, however, Mr. Midlane himself has said that it was his Sunday School teacher who did so much to shape his early life, and who prompted him to poetic efforts. The hymn was first scribbled in the author's notebook, and the original manuscript is still preserved.

A writer who was personally acquainted with the author of "There's a Friend for little children," gives the following as the true story of its origin: "Mr. Midlane's mind had been musing on its outline during the day—and that day a very busy day with other matters—and in the evening, his family having retired

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to rest, he set himself to arrange and complete the idea. But time stole on, and morning came. Every one who has ever felt an intense interest in an undertaking knows that, at all costs, it must be pursued to the end, and so it was in Mr. Midlane's case. The end came at length. Alarmed at his absence, his wife came downstairs, only to find her husband in a state of unconsciousness, with head resting upon the now finished hymn. Restoratives and rest being ordered, consciousness was restored, but the result was that such night occupations were strictly forbidden for the future." Such was the origin of the hymn. On its first appearance, like many other questions of right, its authorship became a question of dispute, and not until a newspaper controversy was it finally settled, and its first signature of "A. M." became the fully recognised name of the now famous hymn writer.

Considering his busy life in connection with an ironmongery business which he conducted, Mr. Midlane was a fairly voluminous writer, well over a thousand poems and hymns having come from his pen. The greater number of these pieces have been published, including the popular revival hymn "Revive Thy work," which is possibly the next best known hymn, followed by "Passing onward, quickly passing." Though few of his hymns manifest a high degree of literary merit, nevertheless, the tone is good, and there is an unmistakable loyalty to the Word of God beautifully expressed, which, perhaps, in hymn writing is of no inconsiderable importance.

It is of interest to learn of the circumstances under which the standard tune, *In Memoriam*, to which the hymn is usually sung, was written: "The committee engaged on the music of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* were meeting in Langham Hotel, London, and when the hymn came up for consideration it was found that

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though they had several tunes before them, none were considered satisfactory. It was suggested that a new tune might be written by one of the committee, and Sir Henry Baker proposed that Sir John Stainer should retire to his (Sir Henry's) bedroom, and try what he could do. Sir John complied with the suggestion, and in a very short time returned with the present tune which was at once adopted." It was in connection with the death of Sir John's young son, Frederick Henry Stainer, which took place about this time, that the tune *In Memoriam* received its name.

The author had the pleasure of witnessing the celebration of the jubilee of his famous hymn, when 3,000 children assembled in St. Paul's Cathedral, London, and joined in the singing of "There's a Friend for little children." Mr. Midlane passed away on February 28th, 1909, and as his body was laid to rest in Carisbrooke Cemetery, a pathos was added to the scene by a number of children, assembled at the graveside, blending their voices to the sweet strains of his immortal hymn.

Another hymn, reminiscent of sweetest memories of childhood's days, is :

" I think when I read that sweet story of old,
When Jesus was here among men,
How He called little children as lambs to His fold :
I should like to have been with Him then."

Written in pencil on the back of an old envelope, while the authoress was travelling in a stage coach nearly a hundred years ago, this little hymn, which quickly rose into favour, is still among our best loved children's hymns. The story of its composition has often been told, but will bear retelling. From an account contained in a charming book of reminiscence, written by Mrs. Jemima Luke, the authoress of the hymn, when

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she had passed her eightieth birthday, we obtain a delightful pen-picture of the origin of this notable children's song.

In 1841, Miss Thompson (as she then was) proceeded to the Normal Infant School, Gray's Inn Road, to obtain some knowledge of the system. Mary Moffat, who afterwards became the wife of the famous Dr. Livingstone, was there at the time. In the course of their duties the teachers had to march up and down the schoolroom singing the marching pieces provided for their future use. Amongst these was a Greek air, the pathos of which at once attracted the young woman's fancy, and she searched several Sunday School hymn books for words to suit the measure, but in vain. Having been recalled home, she went one day on some missionary business to the little town of Wellington, five miles from Taunton, in a stage coach. It was an hour's ride. As she sat there, with no other inside passenger with whom she might converse, her thoughts recalled the pretty little tune with which she had been struck, and taking from her pocket a pencil she wrote on the back of an old envelope the first two verses now so well known. "The child's desire," as the composition was originally called, consisted of only two verses, and a third was afterwards added to make it a missionary hymn. "My father superintended the Sunday School at the little chapel belonging to the estate," writes Mrs. Luke. "He used to let the children choose the first hymn themselves. One Sunday they struck up their new hymn. My father turned to my younger sister who stood near him, and said, 'Where did that come from? I never heard it before,' 'Oh, Jemima made it,' was the reply. On the day following he asked me for a copy of the words and tune. This he sent with the name and address in full, to the *Sunday School Teachers' Magazine*, where it appeared the

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following month. But for my father's intervention the hymn would in all probability never have been preserved."

In her early life, Mrs. Luke had decided to go out to India to engage in missionary work, but was prevented owing to a breakdown in health. Jemima Luke was born in Islington, August 19th, 1813. In 1843 she was married to the Rev. Samuel Luke, a Congregational minister. Though the authoress of "I think when I read that sweet story of old," had a ready pen, she did not produce another hymn of equal merit. Mrs. Luke died at Newport, Isle of Wight, February 2nd, 1906, in her ninety-third year.

A popular children's hymn, which is still a favourite with many of us who are no longer young, is :

" Tell me the old, old Story
 Of unseen things above ;
 Of Jesus and His glory,
 Of Jesus and His love."

It was written by Miss Katherine Hankey, over sixty years ago. Originally, "The old, old story" was a poem running to about fifty verses, of four lines each, in two parts. "The story wanted," formed Part I, and was made up of eight stanzas, which formed the hymn as we now know it. Part II is the answer to the request contained in the first part, and is entitled "The story told." It is a remarkable circumstance that the first part, which is really the request for the story, should become the favourite hymn instead of the story itself. Possibly because the introductory verses, which far surpass the second part, so beautifully express the feelings which are experienced by most of us. "I wrote Part I towards the end of January, 1866," says the writer, "I was unwell at the time—just recovering from a severe illness—and the second

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verse really indicates my state of health, for I was literally 'weak and weary.' When I had written the first part, which consisted of eight verses, I laid it aside, and it was not until the following November that I completed the whole hymn." It is claimed that "Tell me the old, old story" has been translated into more languages than any other children's hymn. Its great popularity is due in no small measure to its close identification with Ira D. Sankey's *Sacred Songs and Solos*.

In Dr. Doane's arrangement, the original four-line verses have been turned into eight-lined stanzas, with the now familiar chorus added. Miss Hankey had already set a simple little tune to the words, and did not at first favour the setting of the American composer, as she considered that each four-lined verse was complete in itself, there being no connecting links between any two of the verses. There is no doubt, however, that but for Dr. Doane's tune, this hymn would not have attained the world-wide popularity it enjoys to-day. Writing to his friend Sankey, some years later, Dr. Doane has this to say about the music, and the occasion on which he composed it: "In 1867 I was attending the International Convention of the Young Men's Christian Association, in Montreal. Among those present was Major-General Russell, then in command of the English forces during the Fenian excitement. He arose in the meeting and recited the words of this song from a sheet of foolscap paper—tears streaming down his bronzed cheeks as he read. I wrote the music for the song one hot afternoon while on the stage-coach between the Glen Falls House and the Crawford House in the White Mountains. That evening we sang it in the parlour of the hotel. We thought it pretty, although we scarcely anticipated the popularity which was subsequently accorded it."

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Many remarkable stories have been told of the wonderful influence "Tell me the old, old story" has exerted. One striking illustration is given in Sankey's volume in which he tells of a young stock-broker, utterly broken in life through gambling and drunken dissipation, who was brought to Christ through hearing a vast audience singing :

"Tell me the story softly,
With earnest tones and grave ;
Remember ! I'm the sinner
Whom Jesus came to save."

A hymn which was specially written over 70 years ago, by a Sunday School teacher for the very tiny members of her class, is :

"Jesus loves me ! this I know,
For the Bible tells me so ;"

The writer is Miss Anna B. Warner, an American lady. It was her invariable custom to write for her scholars a new hymn every month. Selecting a tune with which the children were familiar, Miss Warner would write words to suit the melody. "Jesus loves me" was one of these hymns. Soon after it was written, the hymn came into the hands of William B. Bradbury, who composed the tune to which it has since been sung. This hymn very quickly came into favour, not only in America but in this country, and it would be difficult to find a hymn book with a section for children's hymns which does not contain Anna B. Warner's little hymn. The Rev. Dr. Jacob Chamberlain, who spent a number of years among the Hindus, relates that many years ago he translated into Telugu, "Jesus loves me," and taught it to the children of the day school. "Scarcely a week later," he writes,

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“ as I was going through the streets of the native town on horseback I heard singing, which came from a side street. I stopped to listen, cautiously drawing to a corner, where, unobserved, I could look down the street and see and hear. And there was a little heathen boy, with heathen men and women standing around him, singing at the top of his voice :

“ Jesus love me ! this I know,
For the Bible tells me so.
Yes, Jesus loves me !
The Bible tells me so ! ”

As he completed the verse, some one asked the question : ‘ Sonny, where did you learn that song ? ’ ‘ Over at the missionary school,’ was the answer. ‘ Who is that Jesus, and what is the Bible ? ’ ‘ Oh, the Bible is the book from God, they say, to teach us how to get to heaven ; and Jesus is the name of Him who came into the world to save us from our sins. That is what the missionaries say.’ And so the little boy went on—heathen himself, and singing to the heathen—about Jesus and His love. ‘ That is preaching the Gospel by proxy,’ I said to myself, as I turned my pony and rode away, well satisfied to leave my little proxy to tell his interested audience all he himself knew, and sing to them over and over that sweet song of salvation.”

As a writer of children’s hymns, no name has attained so high a position as that of Mrs. Cecil Frances Alexander. Choicest, and best of all her many beautiful compositions may be placed that tender and inspiring hymn :

“ There is a green hill far away,
Without a city wall,
Where the dear Lord was crucified,
Who died to save us all.”

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Like the authoress of "Jesus loves me," Mrs. Alexander usually wrote her children's hymns for her Sunday School class, who first heard the verses read over to them before they were given out to the world. Mrs. Alexander was the daughter of Major Humphries of the Royal Marines, and was born in Ireland, in 1823. In 1850 she married William Alexander, at that time rector of a country parish in the county of Tyrone. During the five years spent here, Mrs. Alexander's great joy was to visit the poor and needy of her husband's parishioners. Speaking of these days, the old parish clerk was wont to tell of the lady who went with comforts for the sick and sorrowful in all weathers, "when it was not fit for the likes of her to be out!"

Of a kind and benevolent disposition, Mrs. Alexander was beloved by all with whom she came in contact. "From one poor home to another," wrote her husband in his biography of her, "from one bed of sickness to another, from one sorrow to another, she went. Christ was ever with her, and in her, and all felt her influence." It is related that "There is a green hill far away" was composed while Mrs. Alexander sat by the bedside of a sick girl, as she hovered between death and life. It was written in 1847, and first appeared in *Hymns for the Little Children*, a little volume published by the authoress. In 1867, Mrs. Alexander's husband was appointed Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, and ultimately Primate of all Ireland. But their social and ecclesiastical elevation did not deter her from ministering to the needs of the deserving poor in the new sphere to which she had been called. After a long and useful life Mrs. Alexander went to her rest in 1895, at the age of seventy-two. Though the authoress of "There is a green hill" wrote many hundreds of hymns and poems, it is as a writer of hymns for children that the name of Mrs. C. F. Alexander will always be remembered and

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loved. Other children's hymns from the same facile pen, to be found in most hymnals, which have won their way to the hearts of the young, are, "Do no sinful action," "Day by day the little daisy," and the beautiful hymn on the birth of Christ :

"Once in royal David's city,
 Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby
 In a manger for a bed.
Mary was that mother mild,
 Jesus Christ her little child."

Also the following little hymn, which is characterised by the same simplicity and beauty :

"We are but little children weak,
 Nor born in any high estate,
What can we do for Jesus' sake,
 Who is so high and good and great?"

Julia A. Carey, an American hymnist, gave to us that simple little hymn, in language eminently suited for the very tiny young folks :

"Little drops of water,
 Little grains of sand,
Make the mighty ocean,
 And the beauteous land."

Written in 1845, while the authoress was a teacher in the Boston Primary Schools, U.S.A., it was first published in the *Gospel Teacher*. A sixth verse, completing the sentiment of the hymn, was added by Bishop Bickersteth :

"Little ones in glory,
 Swell the angels' song :
Make us meet, dear Saviour,
 For their holy throng."

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“Lord a little band and lowly,” is a delightful little hymn, fragrant with sweet memories. It was written by Martha Evans Shelly (née Jackson), and first appeared in the *Child's Own Hymn Book* in 1844. It has passed into a large number of collections for children, but does not appear to attract present-day compilers in the measure it fully deserves. How this hymn came to be written is told by Mrs. Shelly: “At a Sunday School meeting in Manchester, the Rev. John Curwen, one evening, gave a lecture on singing. He sang a very pretty and simple tune, to which he said he had no suitable words, and wished that some one would write a hymn to it. I wrote these verses and gave them to him at the close of the meeting.”

The tune which Mr. Curwen sang was a German composition, and was given in his *Child's Own Tune Book* under the name of “Glover.” Written in a moment of inspiration, the words convey in simple language, sublime thoughts of praise and prayer.

“Lord, a little band and lowly,
We are come to sing to Thee ;
Thou art great and high and holy ;
O how solemn we should be !
Fill our hearts with thoughts of Jesus,
And of heaven, where He is gone ;
And let nothing ever please us
He would grieve to look upon.

For we know the Lord of Glory
Always sees what children do,
And is writing now the story
Of our thoughts and actions too.
Let our sins be all forgiven ;
Make us fear what e'er is wrong ;
Lead us on our way to heaven,
There to sing a nobler song.”

A hymn of exquisite beauty, and a special favourite with the little ones as an evening prayer is, “Jesus,

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tender Shepherd, hear me." It was written by Mrs. Mary Duncan, a beautiful and accomplished young lady. She was the daughter of Robert Lundie, the parish minister of Kelso, and was born at the manse there, April 26th, 1814. In July, 1836, she was married to William Wallace Duncan, minister of Cleish, Kinross-shire. This tender hymn was written for her own little children,—doubtless with no thought of publicity—about three years after her marriage, when Mrs. Duncan was barely twenty-five, a fact which gives a special interest to the composition. Toward the close of December, 1839, she contracted a severe cold which developed into pneumonia, and on January 5th, just a few months after the hymn was written, the young and beautiful life ended. Though not so widely known as other children's hymns, "Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me," is universally loved all over Scotland, and the words of the first verse are still lisped by the little ones as an evening prayer. There is an unmistakable beauty in its simplicity :

" Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me ;
 Bless Thy little lamb to-night ;
Through the darkness be Thou near me ;
 Watch my sleep till morning light."

This beautiful little prayer, in poetic form, reminds us of a similar composition, perhaps more widely known. Charles Wesley, whose prolific pen gave to the world the immortal "Jesus lover of my soul," also wrote the sweet and tender hymn, which for more than a century has been used in countless homes by children of many generations :

" Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Look upon a little child,
Pity my simplicity,
Suffer me to come to Thee.

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Fain I would to Thee be brought ;
Blessed Lord, forbid it not ;
In the kingdom of Thy grace
Give a little child a place."

This was one of Wesley's earliest hymns, having been written about the year 1740 ; and though it has been repeatedly stated that the hymn was expressly written for his own children, such is not the case, as Charles Wesley was not married until many years after its composition.

F. A. Jones tells the story of an old man, over eighty years of age, who, when he lay dying, endeavoured in vain to recall a single prayer or hymn which might help to comfort him in his journey into the unknown. Since the age of twenty he had lived a godless life, forgetting the truths imbibed in his earlier days. Suddenly his vision cleared, and he saw himself a little lad again, kneeling at his mother's knee, repeating his evening hymn ; unconsciously from his lips issued these tender words which for nearly seventy years he had neither uttered nor heard—"Gentle Jesus, meek and mild." But is it not the same with many of us ? Many summers may have passed since those bygone childhood days, and yet with us there still linger cherished memories of the time when we, too, knelt by a mother's knee, and repeated the same old familiar lines.

CHAPTER VIII.

How we got our Popular Gospel Song

WHILE psalms and hymns stretch far back across the centuries, one department of it is of fairly recent origin. Gospel singing, as has already been observed, is a modern institution, and America can rightly be claimed as its birth-place. In the days of long ago the negroes of the Southern States chanted their own simple melodies, and in their own crude way were expressing the feelings and aspirations of the heart toward God. This particular type of negro is naturally a lover of song, and when, on occasions, he came to express his emotions, words and music followed with remarkable smoothness. From these old melodies, musicians of a later day have drawn an inspiration, as in the case of Ira D. Sankey's famous hymn "The ninety and nine," the melody of which is said to have had its origin in an old Southern plantation song, called "A wonderful stream is the river of time." The extraordinary way in which Sankey composed it anew to Miss Clephane's little poem is referred to in another chapter.

The question may arise: What constitutes an acceptable and useful Gospel song? The views of the writer are so well delineated by the graphic pen

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of Charles H. Gabriel of America, the King of Gospel Hymn Writers, that we shall borrow his language : "First, the text must be systematically constructed, be spiritual and devotional ; it should begin with an immediate declaration of subject, followed by an explication presented in a logical and intelligent manner. Gospel music is the language of the heart ; the expression of hope, trust, longing, sorrow, joy, and even despair of the soul. It is the spontaneous overflow of happiness and a healing balm for the wounds of life ; it is both sermon and song, praise and prayer, oblivion and remembrance."

No one would venture to assert that American hymnology contains anything to be compared with the masterpieces of English collections. Philip Phillips, popularly known as the "Singing Pilgrim," in the early seventies first brought to this country from America this new class of sacred music, which was subsequently used by Moody and Sankey in the early days of their British campaign. It may not be generally known that Newcastle-on-Tyne was the birth-place of the now famous Sankey hymn book. The hymns and tunes used at that period in the various places of worship in this country did not appear to be adapted for evangelical services, and the American evangelists adopted Philip Phillips' book, which contained many American hymns and some English tunes. This collection started in a very modest form, but in course of time, as new hymns were being written, fresh editions were published, until *Sacred Songs and Solos* gained a popularity among the masses that few of its successors enjoyed.

Writing at a later period, Sankey gives some interesting information bearing on the early days of his hymn book. The evangelists had only been a short time in England, and were conducting meetings

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in the provinces, when Sankey wrote to London offering to give his selection of songs to the publishers of Philip Phillips' hymn book, *Hallowed Songs*, free of charge if they would print them. This they respectfully declined. About this time, Mr. R. C. Morgan, of *The Christian*, on hearing of the refusal of the other publishers to accept the hymns, offered to take them and publish them in pamphlet form. So Mr. Sankey cut from his scrap book twenty-three pieces, rolled them up, and wrote on them the words "Sacred Songs and Solos, sung by Ira D. Sankey at the meetings of Moody of Chicago." "This book, together with the edition of words only," says Mr. Sankey, "has now grown into a volume of twelve hundred pieces, and up to the present time has possibly the largest sale of any book except the Bible."

It is interesting to learn that, even in these days of many hymn books, *Sacred Songs and Solos* has not diminished in public favour, for up to the end of last year (1930), the sale had reached the unparalleled total of more than seventy million copies.

The visit of the American evangelists to this country, when the famous Sankey hymn book was first introduced to the world, received tremendous publicity. Wherever they went their reception was usually of the most cordial nature, while their hymns were sung and referred to in the most unlikely places. For instance, during a circus performance in Dublin, one clown, with a pretended air of dejection, said to another, "I say, I feel quite Moody to-night; how do you feel?" "Oh," responded the other, "I'm rather Sankeymonious." Contrary to what was expected, this by-play was not only met with hisses, but the whole audience rose to their feet and joined with tremendous effect in singing, "Hold the fort for I am coming!"

A story is told connected with a visit, about this

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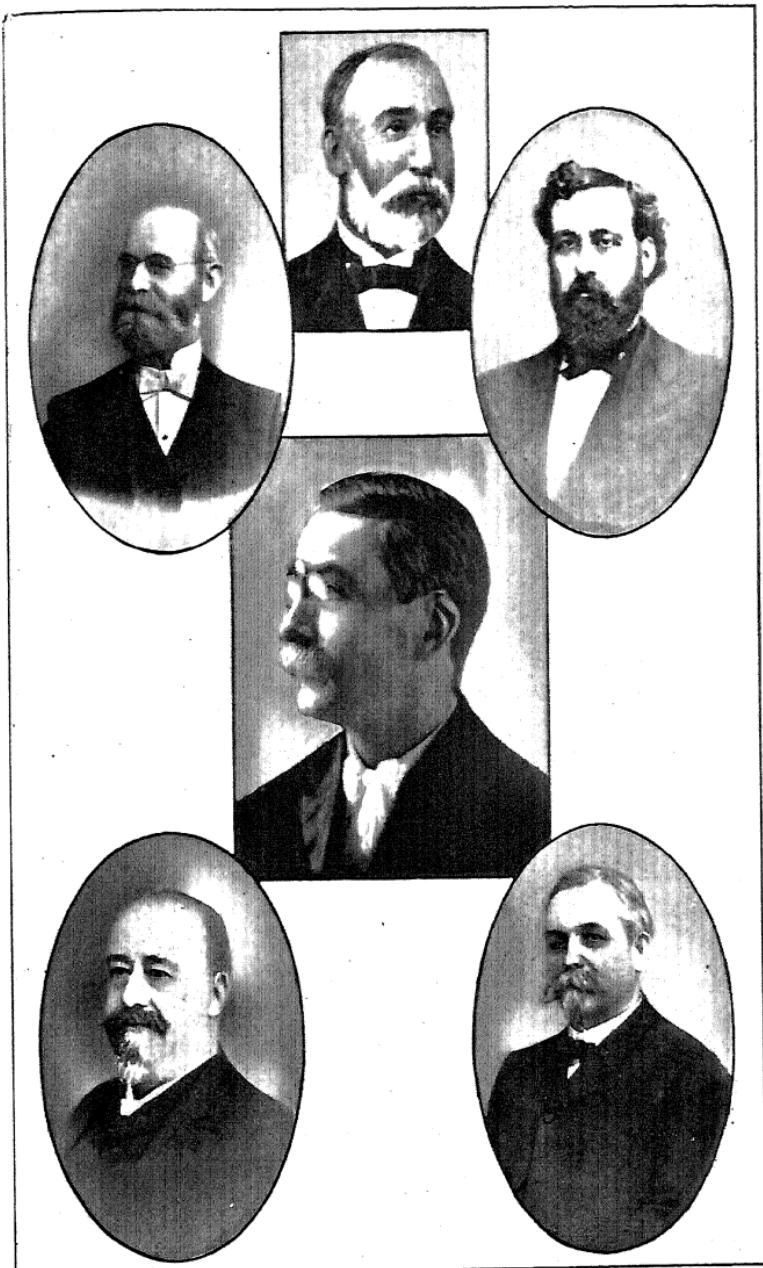
particular time, of the late Professor Blackie to Carlisle. Upon his departure from the Border city, the professor was given by his hostess a parcel, with strict injunctions not to open it until well on his journey ; when he did so, he discovered it contained some bread and cheese, and one of Moody and Sankey's hymn books. Professor Blackie proved equal to the occasion, and replied to his hostess :

" For the body, cheese,
For the soul, Sankey ;
For both of which, madam,
I heartily thank ye :
And blessed be she
Who did what she could,
To make a lean man fat,
And a bad man good."

Sankey's faith in the power of sacred song was fully rewarded, for he lived to see these songs make their way into the hearts of millions of people.

Among writers who laid the foundation of American Gospel hymnody the following names are familiar : W. B. Bradbury, P. P. Bliss, Philip Phillips, Ira D. Sankey, James McGranahan, W. J. Kirkpatrick, Robert Lowry, George C. Stebbins, H. R. Palmer, D. W. Whittle, T. C. O'Kane, J. R. Sweney, W. H. Doane, Fanny Crosby, E. O. Excell and Charles H. Gabriel. Of this group of sweet singers, whose songs have been carried to the ends of the earth, Mr. Stebbins and Mr. Gabriel alone remain.

Foremost amongst the hymn writers of half a century ago, when this new type of Gospel song came into being, consequent upon a wave of spiritual awakening throughout the United States of America, comes the name of Philip Paul Bliss, author of " Hold the Fort," " Whosoever will," " Almost persuaded," " Man of sorrows," " Free from the law," and a host of other



MAJOR W. D. WHITTLE.

W. J. KIRKPATRICK.

P. P. BLISS.

J. R. SWEENEY.

C. H. GABRIEL.

J. McGRANAHAN.

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popular songs sung the world over. Of Puritan ancestry, Mr. Bliss was born in the forest and mountain region of Northern Pennsylvania on July 9th, 1838. His parents were poor and he had little help in the battle of life, but he won the victory. From the beginning, a love of song grew with his years, and instinctively his childish ear was caught by any note of nature. Thus we find Philip drawing forth notes from the reeds which grew near his father's house, and at the age of seven he was making for himself crude instruments in a most original fashion. When a boy of ten summers, he heard a piano for the first time. In later years, at a musical conference which he addressed, Mr. Bliss, speaking of his early days, told a very impressive story. "A barefooted mountain lad had gone, as was his custom, to the little village with his basket of fresh vegetables, which he peddled from door to door. One day, having sold his stock, he was on his way home, when the sound of music was wafted to his ear through the open door of a house by the way ; he paused ; the music continued, and drew him nearer, and nearer, until, unconsciously, he had entered the room where a lady was playing a piano accompaniment to the song she was singing. Entranced, he stood listening, his very soul lost in a sea of delight ; such music he had never before heard. Some movement of his attracted the lady's attention ; she turned, and seeing the boy, with a little scream of surprise cried out : 'What are you doing in my house ? Get out of here with your great bare feet.' " Looking down at his feet as he told the story, Mr. Bliss continued, slowly : "Yes, my feet are large—but God gave them to me ; and how I wish that that lady's children were here that I might sing to them."

Towards the end of 1857, when but a youth, Mr. Bliss attended a Musical Convention at Rome in Penn-

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sylvania. It was here that he made the acquaintance of Mr. William B. Bradbury, a pioneer of American Gospel hymnody, and the author of many popular pieces of sacred song. The Convention turned the thoughts of Mr. Bliss to the subject of writing hymns, and we find it was about this time that he produced his first composition, which was to be followed by so many powerful sermons in song to be used for the glory of his Master in days to come. In the year 1869 an event occurred which Mr. Bliss regarded as the most important in his life ; this was his meeting with Mr. D. L. Moody, who was then holding Gospel services in Chicago. Being possessed with a sweet, sympathetic bass voice of splendid tone and quality, Mr. Bliss's powerful singing at once attracted the attention of the evangelist. This memorable meeting constituted an epoch, for, from the time Mr. Moody met with Mr. Bliss, dates his impression of the unmistakable power of solo-singing in these evangelistic labours. Why should it be considered strange, he reasoned, that singing by a man of taste and musical ability, should soften the heart, and by God's blessing, break the hard crust of worldliness that may have gathered over the soul ? It was only logical to suppose that if the voice of powerful speaking can arouse the conscience, why may not singing do the same ? And thus, the vivid impression of the power of Gospel song which Mr. Moody received when he met Mr. Bliss, forms an epoch in the history of a movement that has been among the most blessed and remarkable during the last half-century, and has, to a great extent, changed the nature of religious meetings in all parts of Christendom. From a letter written by Mr. Bliss about this time, we take the following : " This singing and talking about the Good News of a present, perfect, free salvation, and justification by faith, is so popular and attractive, I do not

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believe I shall ever find time for anything else. It seems to me it is needed. How much of everything else we hear preached, and how little Gospel ! ” Soon after this Mr. Bliss made the acquaintance of Major D. W. Whittle, an earnest evangelist, with whom he laboured for some time in the city of Chicago. The major took Mr. Bliss to stay with him at his house, number 43, South Street, and it was here that Mr. Bliss wrote the words and music of the popular hymn :

“ I am so glad that our Father in heaven
Tells of His love in the Book He has given ;
Wonderful things in the Bible I see ;
This is the dearest that Jesus loves me.”

—and of that stirring martial strain, familiar now to tens of thousands, “ Hold the fort, for I am coming ! ”

Mr. Bliss realised more than any one the importance of storing the young mind with Gospel song, and his ability to teach children to sing a new hymn was amazing. From the moment he named a piece he seemed to inspire all with his enthusiasm, and while he led in some bright song, not an eye would wander from him, nor a face be dull. “ He would say a few pithy words,” writes one who was present at one of these memorable services, “ explaining the sentiment of the song, a few more, possibly about the music and how to render it ; sing a strain or two alone, then, after two or three repetitions, the school would march through and ring it out as if they had been familiar with it for months. It was as if he had the gift of infusing music into everybody. No matter how little musical culture or skill teachers and scholars had, no matter how out of key or out of time, they were naturally inclined to sing. Somehow, when Mr. Bliss led, the difficulties and irregularities and discords seemed to disappear, and

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there was one grand thrill of feeling, one royal burst of harmony."

Altogether, Mr. P. P. Bliss wrote seven books of Sacred Songs, besides various contributions to musical journals. To him song-writing was a spontaneous outflow of the emotions and melody with which his soul was filled. When he found that God was using his songs to bring out some precious truth of the Gospel of love, or the exaltation of Christ his Lord, his heart would overflow with joy. Often he would come to his wife with the theme of a hymn, with his face shining and his eyes moist with tears, and would ask for prayers that God would bless the song.

Mr. Bliss had indeed a wonderful gift, and not only could he write stirring Gospel songs, but with very little effort he could compose appropriate and attractive music for them, which had much to do with their immediate popularity. As we have already seen, the songs were first introduced to the British public by Mr. Sankey during the great revival services held throughout the United Kingdom in 1873-74. Indeed, the greater number of the Gospel songs and solos sung by Mr. Sankey in this country were the compositions of Mr. Bliss.

Dr. F. W. Root, a celebrated composer and friend of Mr. Bliss, gives a very graphic pen-picture of this notable hymn writer. "He was a poet-musician," he writes, "and if ever a man seemed fashioned by the Divine hand for special and exalted work, that man was P. P. Bliss. He had a splendid physique, a handsome face, and a dignified, striking presence. It sometimes seemed incongruous, delightfully so, that in one of such great size and masculine appearance there should also appear such gentleness of manner, such perfect amiability, such conspicuous lack of self-assertion, such considerateness and deference to all,

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and such almost feminine sensitiveness. He had not had opportunities for large intellectual culture, but his natural mental gifts were wonderful. His faculty for seizing upon salient features of whatever came under his notice amounted to an unerring instinct. Mr. Bliss's voice was always a marvel to me. He used occasionally to come to my room, requesting that I would look into his vocalization with a view to suggestions. At first a few suggestions were made, but latterly I could do nothing but admire. Beginning with E flat, or even D flat below, he would, without apparent effort, produce a series of clarion tones, in an ascending series, until, having reached the D (fourth line tenor clef), I would look to see him weaken and give up, as would most bass singers; but no, on he would go, taking D sharp, E, F, F sharp, and G, without weakness, without throatiness, without sound of straining, and without the usual apoplectic look of effort. I feel quite sure in saying that his chest range was from D flat below to A flat above, the quality being strong and agreeable throughout, and one vowel as good as another. He would have made a name and fortune on the dramatic stage."

On December 29th, 1876, Philip P. Bliss met his death in a railway disaster. He was travelling toward Chicago, when at Ashtabula, Ohio, a bridge gave way and the whole train was thrown into the stream below. Mr. Bliss might have escaped, but in an endeavour to rescue his wife from the flaming car he lost his life. Had it not been for that eventful wreck, what songs he might have given to the world, for he then was but 38 years of age.

CHAPTER IX.

Hymn Writers of America

IN the previous chapter the endeavour has been to set forth as simply and lucidly as possible, the story of how we got our popular Gospel song. To do so, one of the pioneers of the work in this particular realm of hymnody was singled out and used as a vehicle by which, as we look back and see this wonderful movement spreading from country to country, and being used of God, we can, in a greater measure, comprehend its remarkable development and far-reaching results. This chapter will be devoted to sketching a brief history of some of the best known Gospel hymn writers of America. As a great number of this particular type of hymn were written during the period with which we have already dealt, this chapter, while running in sequence affords another opportunity to gather still further from the fertile fields of Gospel hymnody of America.

Among the sweet singers of the last two generations, the name of Frances Jane Crosby is a familiar one on both sides of the Atlantic. Her hymns are sung everywhere, and by Christians of all denominations, because they so beautifully express the wonderful spiritual influence upon the heart and life. She was born in the town of Southeast, Putnam County, New York, on March 24th, 1820, and her parents greatly rejoiced because God had sent them a babe. But in a few weeks their joy was turned to sorrow, for the little girl's

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eyes began to inflame ; the physician made a mistake in his treatment of the trouble, and as the result, Fanny Crosby became hopelessly blind. Fanny, however, was an optimist, dwelling little on her affliction, and not one word did she ever speak of blame for the physician who had been responsible for her sad plight. "It may have been a blunder on the physician's part," she said in later years ; "it was no mistake of God's." Among her greatest blessings she has always counted instruction in the Bible, and when only ten years old, she was able to recite the first five books of the Old Testament, and the first four in the New Testament. At the age of fifteen she was taken to the New York school for the blind, the first of its kind in the country. Always passionately fond of poetry, Fanny began writing verses when quite young, and when she was twenty-four years of age she timidly gathered up a few of her early poems and had them published under the title, *The Blind Girl, and other Poems*. The book attracted the notice of the celebrated American poet, William Cullen Bryant, who visited Fanny and spoke encouragingly to the young writer. Other volumes followed in quick succession, but it was not till 1864 that she began the great life-work for which she had been unconsciously preparing, the writing of hymns. "I verily believe," she wrote, "that it was God's intention that I should live my days in physical darkness, so as to be better prepared to sing His praise and incite others so to do. I could not have written thousands of hymns if I had been hindered by the distractions that would have been presented to my notice." The year 1850 was a memorable one, for it was the year of her conversion and consecration to God's service. Gospel meetings were being held in a Methodist Church near by. "Some of us," she writes, "went every evening, but although I sought peace, I could not

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find the joy I craved until one evening—November 20th, 1850—I arose and went forward alone. After prayer the congregation began to sing the grand old consecration hymn of Dr. Isaac Watts :

‘ Alas and did my Saviour bleed ?
And did my Sovereign die ?
Would He devote that sacred Head
For such a worm as I ? ’

And when they reached the third line of the last verse :

‘ Here, Lord, I give myself away ;
’Tis all that I can do ’

—I surrendered myself to the Saviour, and my very soul was flooded with celestial light. I sprang to my feet, shouting ‘ Hallelujah ! ’ ” Miss Crosby was married in 1858 to Mr. Alexander Van Alstyne, a teacher in the institution for the blind, but her husband wisely and unselfishly urged her to retain her maiden name in connection with her work, and always took a great interest in the genius of his wife.

Fanny Crosby, by which name she has always been known, first met Ira D. Sankey early in his career, and he set to music several of her hymns and used them with remarkable success in his evangelistic missions with D. L. Moody, which stirred the whole world for so many years. The singing evangelist she revered as God’s messenger of living song. They worked together with unison of soul, for the uplift of the downcast by means of sacred song. Mr. Sankey was very fond of the blind poetess, and to the day when he himself lost his sight, there were few who brought more joy and peace to his heart than Fanny Crosby.

Altogether she has written about seven thousand hymns, and some of the best known are : “ Safe in the

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arms of Jesus," "Rescue the perishing," "Jesus keep me near the Cross," "Blessed Assurance," "I shall know Him," "I am Thine, O Lord," "Saved by Grace."

A remarkable circumstance, not generally known, in connection with this gifted authoress' hymn writing, is that she rarely composed her verses without a small book or Testament held open before her eyes.

When Fanny Crosby was forty-eight years of age, Dr. W. H. Doane, who has written so many beautiful hymn tunes and was a constant friend of the blind hymn writer, came one day into the office of Biglow and Main in New York, and finding Fanny Crosby there in conversation with Mr. W. B. Bradbury, he said to her, "Fanny, I have just written a tune, and I want you to write a hymn for it." "Let me hear it," she replied. After he had played it over for her on a small organ, she exclaimed, "Why, that tune says, 'Safe in the arms of Jesus,' and I will see what I can do about it." She at once went into an adjoining room, and in half an hour returned and repeated to him the words of the hymn:

"Safe in the arms of Jesus,
Safe on His gentle breast,
There by His love o'er shaded,
Sweetly my soul shall rest.
Hark! 'tis the voice of angels
Borne in a song to me,
Over the fields of glory
Over the jasper sea."

It was first published in Dr. Doane's book, entitled *Songs of Devotion*, in 1868. The hymn obtained great favour at once, and is said to be one of the first hymns of its kind the words of which were translated into a foreign language.

There is also her sweet consecration hymn which seems to make the deepest chords of one's spiritual

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nature vibrate, as with a touch of Heaven's own influence :

“ I am Thine, O Lord, I have heard Thy voice,
And it told Thy love to me ;
But I long to rise in the arms of faith,
And be closer drawn to Thee.
Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
To the Cross where Thou hast died,
Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer blessed Lord,
To Thy precious bleeding side.”

At the age of seventy-one Fanny Crosby wrote the hymn “ Saved by Grace ” which has now become so widely known. The story of how it came into being is worthy of relating here. While visiting Mr. Sankey at Northfield, Mass., where the summer conferences were held, Mr. Sankey asked her to make a short address to her many friends, as a message had been sent in by some of those present that they wished to hear her speak. She at first begged to be excused, but on further persuasion, consented to speak a few words. Mr. Sankey led her forward to the desk on which lay the Bible, and after speaking eloquently for a short time, Fanny closed her remarks by reciting this beautiful hymn, beginning :

“ Some day the silver cord will break,
And I no more as now shall sing,
But O, the joy when I shall wake
Within the palace of the King ! ”

The chorus is all the more affecting remembering the blindness of the writer :

“ And I shall see Him face to face,
And tell the story, *saved by grace.*”

When she had finished, Mr. Sankey turned to her and said, “ Why, Fanny, where did you get that beautiful hymn ? ” “ You ought to know,” was her reply

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IRA D. SANKEY AND FANNY CROSBY.

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“ These are the verses I gave you three years ago, and which I suppose have been put away in the safe with all my other unpublished hymns.” The poetess had a wonderful memory, and although she had composed several hundred hymns since writing the words of “ Saved by Grace,” she was able to recite the hymn, word for word, exactly as she had penned it. Mr. George C. Stebbins set the words to an attractive tune, with the result that “ Saved by Grace ” has become one of the most useful and popular of modern hymns. The last verse is especially beautiful :

“ Some day, when fades the golden sun
Beneath the rosy-tinted west,
My blessed Lord will say, ‘ Well done,’
And I shall enter into rest.”

That “ Some day ” came on February 11th, 1915, when the sweet singer of America entered into “ The Palace of the King ” at the age of ninety-five.

Mention has already been made of Philip Phillips, known in the early days as the “ Singing Pilgrim.” Though he laid no claim to being an educated musician, nevertheless he has composed many beautiful tunes, and being possessed of a voice of peculiar influence, he was able to impress his earnestness upon his hearers. As has been noted elsewhere, Philip Phillips was among the first to broadcast the Gospel by song, previous to the world-wide work of Moody and Sankey. Probably the hymn most closely associated with his name is, “ The home of the Soul.” There is a striking incident related of him when on a visit to the Holy Land, which will illustrate the wonderfully magnetic influence of Philip Phillips’ powerful singing. “ One day, as they wandered amid scenes of sacred memory, they were startled by the cry of ‘ Unclean ! unclean ! ’ Looking up the mountain side they plainly saw the

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lepers. After watching them a moment Mr. Phillips began singing that peerless song :

‘ I will sing you a song of that beautiful land
The far-away home of the soul,
Where no storms ever beat on the glittering strand
While the years of eternity roll.’

In silence those helplessly afflicted human beings stood listening as he sang stanza after stanza. They understood not a word he said, possibly, but the soul of the singer seemed to speak in a language that even they could comprehend, and in respectful attention they stood until the song ended, and the little party of American tourists passed from their view.”

The words of “ The Home of the Soul ” were written by Mrs. Ellen H. Gates, an American lady, after reading the narrative of Christian and Hopeful at the gate of Heaven in Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*. “ When the verses were forwarded to me, in 1865,” wrote Mr. Phillips, “ I seated myself in my home with my little boy on my knee, and with Bunyan’s immortal dream-book in my hand, and began to read the closing scenes where Christian and Hopeful entered into the city ; wondering at Bunyan’s rare genius, and like the dreamer of old, wishing myself among them. At this moment of inspiration I turned to the organ, with pencil in hand, and wrote the tune. This hymn seems to have had God’s special blessing upon it from the very beginning. One man writes me that he has led in the singing of it at a hundred and twenty funerals. It was also sung at the funeral of my own dear boy, who had sat on my knee when I wrote the tune.” This hymn was sung by Mr. Sankey over the remains of his beloved friend, Philip Phillips, the composer, at Fredonia, New York.

A hymn to be found in most mission hymn books has this chorus :

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“ Moment by moment I’m kept in His love ;
Moment by moment I’ve life from above ;
Looking to Jesus till glory shall shine ;
Moment by moment, O Lord, I am Thine.”

It was written by Major D. W. Whittle, a close friend and colleague of P. P. Bliss, and the author of a considerable number of hymns in popular use to-day. A remark by Henry Varley, the evangelist, to the effect that he did not very much like the hymn, “ I need Thee every hour,” “ Because,” said he, “ I need Him every moment of the day,” gave the idea of the hymn “ Moment by moment ” to Major Whittle. His daughter, May Whittle, who afterwards became the wife of Will R. Moody, composed the music.

Daniel Webster Whittle was born at Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts, November 22nd, 1840. At the outbreak of the Civil War, in 1861, he enlisted in the 72nd Illinois Infantry, and saw much active service. At one time he was Provost Marshal on General Howard’s staff, and was with Sherman in his famous march to the sea. It was after a severe engagement at Vicksburg in which he lost his right arm, and was taken prisoner by the enemy, that he was awakened to see his need of a Saviour. While he was recovering from his wound, and having a desire for something to read, he felt in his haversack and found the little Testament his mother had placed there on the morning of his departure for the war. For the first time he opened its pages. He read right through the book several times. Every part was interesting to him, and he found to his surprise that he could understand it in a way that he never had before. He understood the presentation of the truth in Paul’s letter to the Romans and had it plainly before his mind that God gave Jesus, His Son, to be our Substitute, and that whoever would confess their sins and accept Him, should be saved. While in

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this state of mind, yet with no fixed purpose to repent and accept the Saviour, he was awakened one midnight by an orderly, who said : “ There is a boy in the other end of the ward who is dying. He has been begging me for the past hour to pray for him, but I’m a wicked man and cannot.” “ Why,” said Whittle, “ I can’t pray. I never prayed in my life. I am just as wicked as you are.” “ Can’t pray ! ” said the orderly. “ Why, I thought sure from seeing you read the Testament, that you were a praying man. I can’t go back there alone. Won’t you get up and come and see him at any rate ? ” Moved by his appeal young Whittle arose from his cot and went with the orderly to the far corner of the room. A fair haired boy of seventeen or eighteen lay there dying. There was a look of intense agony upon his face, as he cried : “ Oh, pray for me ! Pray for me ! I am dying. I was a good boy at home in Maine and went to Sunday School. But since I became a soldier I have learned to be wicked. And now I am dying, and I am not fit to die ! Oh, ask God to forgive me ! Ask Christ to save me ! ” “ I dropped on my knees,” said Major Whittle when telling the story, “ and held the boy’s hand in mine, as in a few broken words I confessed my sins, and asked God for Christ’s sake to forgive me. I believe right there that he did forgive me, and that I was His child. I then prayed earnestly for the boy. He became quiet and pressed my hand as I pleaded God’s promises. When I arose from my knees he was dead. A look of peace was upon his face, and I can but believe that God, who used him to bring me to the Saviour, used me to get his attention fixed upon Christ, and to lead him to trust in His precious blood. I hope to meet him in Heaven.”

But for that little Testament placed in her soldier boy’s haversack by that praying mother, the realm of

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hymnody would have been poorer to-day. For, though some of Major Whittle's hymns may to a certain extent lack literary merit, yet they ring true, and have been wonderfully used of God.

A testimony song, the joyous strains of which rarely fail to bring back happy memories of our first love, is still as heartily sung both at mission services and in the home as the day it was written :

“ Come sing, my soul, and praise the Lord,
Who hath redeemed thee by His blood ;
Delivered thee from chains that bound,
And brought thee to redemption ground.”

Then there is that song of the joyous anticipation of our Lord's coming again, the chorus of which is so familiar to the ear :

“ Oh, the crowning day is coming !
Is coming by and by !
When our Lord shall come in ‘ power ’
And ‘ glory ’ from on high !
Oh, the glorious sight will gladden
Each waiting, watchful eye,
In the crowning day that’s coming
By and by.”

A favourite at Prayer Meetings and Revival Services and one which alone would have caused the author's name to be remembered is the hymn beginning :

“ There shall be showers of blessing :
This is the promise of love ;
There shall be seasons refreshing,
Sent from the Saviour above.
Showers of blessing,
Showers of blessing we need ;
Mercy-drops round us are falling,
But for the showers we plead.”

This hymn owes much of its popularity to an appropriate tune by Mr. James McGranahan, a colleague of Sankey, and one of the foremost composers of

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Gospel music of his day. Other familiar hymns by Major Whittle, include : "The love that gave Jesus to die," "Jesus is coming," "I know whom I have believed," "I looked to Jesus," "There's a royal banner," and "Come believing." Many of Major Whittle's hymns were written over the *nom de plume* "EL NATHAN." He passed away at Northfield, March 4th, 1901.

Among mission hymns there is one that never seems to grow old. For well nigh half a century it has been sung at Gospel meetings, in church and chapel, in mission hall and at open-air services, wherever the Gospel has been proclaimed. At home, or in lands beyond the sea, its joyful strain has ever been in the ascendant :

"Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power ?
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb ?
Are you fully trusting in His grace this hour ?
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb ?"

Elisha A. Hoffman, the composer of both words and music, was born at Orwigsburg, Pa., on May 7th, 1839. His father was a minister of the Gospel in the Evangelical Association, and the son followed actively in his footsteps. Mr. Hoffman was both poet and musician, and more than two thousand hymns have come from his pen, some having been translated into many languages and sung all round the world. Almost every one is familiar with the following hymns by Mr. Hoffman : "The Lord is coming by and by," "What a wonderful Saviour," "Abundantly able to save," "Resting in the everlasting arms," "Where will you spend Eternity ?" and that sweetest of all prayer meeting hymns :

"'Tis the blessed hour of prayer, when our hearts lowly bend,
And we gather to Jesus, our Saviour and Friend ;
If we come to Him in faith, His protection to share,
What a balm for the weary ! Oh, how sweet to be there."

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A hymn better known in America than in this country is : "I must tell Jesus." Regarding its origin, Mr. Hoffman relates a very interesting story : "While I was pastor at Lebanon, Pa., I called one day at the home of a parishioner and found the lady in great distress and sorrow. Wringing her hands she cried : 'What shall I do, what shall I do ?' I replied : 'You cannot do better than take it all to Jesus—you must tell Jesus.' For a moment she seemed abstracted in meditation, then her face glowed, her eyes lighted up, and with animation she exclaimed : 'Yes, I must tell Jesus, I must tell Jesus !' As I went from that sorrow-filled home a vision walked before me, a vision of a joy-illumined face, of a soul transformed from darkness into light, and I heard all along my pathway the echo of a tender voice saying, 'I must tell Jesus.' " Immediately on reaching his study Mr. Hoffman wrote both the words and music of the hymn "I must tell Jesus," which has brought comfort and solace to many a weary heart. Here is the first verse :

" I must tell Jesus all of my trials ;
I cannot bear these burdens alone,
In my distress He kindly will help me,
He ever loves and cares for his own."

One of my earliest recollections of Gospel song was hearing my mother sing in the quiet of our home one of the hymns from Sankey's first hymn book, which was ever a favourite :

" Oh what a Saviour—that He died for me !
From condemnation He hath set me free ;
' He that believeth on the Son,' saith He,
' Hath everlasting life.'
 ' Verily, verily, I say unto you ;'
 ' Verily, verily,' message ever new !
 ' He that believeth on the Son'—'tis true !—
 ' Hath everlasting life.' "

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Incongruous though it may seem, this chorus was used as a lullaby by which we children were put to sleep in the old rocking chair, to the song's easy flowing measure.

It was comparatively new then. Since that far off day "Verily ! Verily !" has been sung wherever Christ is preached, and now takes its place amongst the best known Gospel hymns. James McGranahan, the writer of the words and music of this hymn, was born at Adamsville, Pa., in 1840, and while a lad, learned to read music and sing alto. One of the pioneers of Gospel song, Mr. McGranahan was closely associated with Ira D. Sankey during his many Gospel campaigns. He succeeded P. P. Bliss in evangelistic work with Major Whittle, and for years his matchless tenor voice was heard in Gospel songs, both in America and England. Mr. McGranahan's hymns were, and still are in great favour, and that too, after a generation has passed. As an illustration, an incident occurred while Mr. Moody was conducting a ten days' mission in Spurgeon's Tabernacle, London, toward the end of 1892. During these meetings, Mr. Moody received a request from Queen Mary, who was then Princess Mary of Teck,—who, with her mother, the Duchess of Teck, were in the audience—that Mr. McGranahan's beautiful hymn "Sometime we'll understand" should be sung. The request was, of course, readily complied with. This little incident is interesting for two reasons, first, as illustrating the favour with which not only Mr. McGranahan's hymns, but the compositions of other writers of this class of hymn were received in this country; and second, as an indication that they have found their way into the palaces of royalty as well as the homes of the people, where one cannot doubt they have proved a blessing to many. Mr. McGranahan is also the composer of words and music of : "I am

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the way," "If God be for us," "They that wait upon the Lord."

A splendid musician, Mr. McGranahan is the composer of a great many well-known hymn tunes to be found in almost every evangelistic hymn book in present use. He fell asleep a few days after his sixty-seventh birthday, at his home at Kinsman, Ohio, resting upon his favourite verse "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me hath everlasting life" (John vi. 47).

Among the writers of Sunday School, evangelistic and devotional music, there are few names better known than that of Robert Lowry, the author of the popular hymn "Shall we gather at the river?" He was born at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on March 12th, 1826, and became a true follower of the Lord Jesus at the age of seventeen. In earlier years he prepared for and entered the ministry of the Baptist denomination, his first charge being at West Chester, Pennsylvania. After many years in different pastorates, he was appointed Professor of Rhetoric in Lewisburg University. Dr. Lowry has been associated with some of the most popular Sunday School hymn books published in America. A musician of considerable ability, most of his hymns are set to music by himself, and are extremely popular. Although not by any means his best production it is in connection with the hymn "Shall we gather at the river?" that the name of Robert Lowry will always be associated. Having received the story from the lips of the author himself, Sankey tells us how the hymn came into being.

"On a sultry afternoon in July, 1864, Dr. Lowry was sitting at his study table in Elliot Place, Brooklyn, when the words of the hymn, "Shall we gather at the river?" came to him. An epidemic was raging through the city at the time, and he had been pondering the question,

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‘ Why do hymn writers say so much about the river of death, and so little about the pure river of the water of life ? ’ He hastily recorded the words, and then sat down before his parlour organ and composed the tune which is now sung in practically all the Sunday Schools of the world.”

When visiting London in 1880 on the occasion of the Raikes Centenary, when Sunday School workers from various parts of the world had come together, Dr. Lowry received a tremendous oration when introduced to the vast audience as the author of this hymn ; and for some minutes it was impossible for him to speak ; surely an eloquent testimony to the value of a hymn, beloved the world over. He is also the composer of the music to that martial strain : “ We’re marching to Zion,” and that tender hymn, “ I need Thee every hour.”

Dr. Lowry wrote the words and music of that popular mission hymn :

“ What can wash away my stain ?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus ! ”

Also that glorious resurrection hymn, the chorus of which is so well known :

“ Up from the grave He arose,
With a mighty triumph o’er His foes ;
He rose a Victor from the dark domain,
And He lives for ever with His saints to reign ;
He arose ! He arose !
Hallelujah ! Christ arose ! ”

He is also the composer of that pathetic hymn, “ Where is my wandering boy to-night ? ” which is said to have arrested many a wanderer on the downward road ; of which the following story is a striking instance. The principal speaker at a meeting which filled to

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overflowing the Athenaeum at Bury, Lancashire, was a lady who held the vast audience enthralled by her earnestness. At the close of her discourse she said, "Before I came to Bury this afternoon, I made a call at Haslingden to see a dear old woman. I told here I was coming and for why ; when, with tears in her eyes, she said, 'I wonder whether you can find my wandering boy ? ' "

Then came the words :

" Go for my wandering boy to-night ;
Go, search for him where you will ;
But bring him to me with all his blight,
And tell him I love him still."

"I wonder," continued the speaker, pausing for a moment, "whether that wandering boy is here ?" "Yes !" exclaimed a voice, and from the back of the hall, through crowded aisles, a young man made his way to the front. Reaching forward, the speaker grasped the outstretched hand of the youth, and after exchanging a few words, the lady raised her hand, and amid a tense silence said, "Yes, it is that mother's boy. Do you wonder, when I tell you that before I came away we knelt down in that cottage, and prayed that this boy might be found ?" The prayer was answered. That night the wandering boy returned home.

Many of Dr. Lowry's hymns were written after the Sunday evening service, when his mind refused to rest. He passed away at Plainfield, New Jersey, on November 25th, 1899, at the age of seventy-three, but will continue to preach the Gospel by his hymns long after his sermons have been forgotten.

Dr. George F. Root, the author of a favourite hymn for young folks commencing :

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“ Come to the Saviour, make no delay ;
Here in His Word He has shown us the way ;
Here in our midst He’s standing to-day,
Tenderly saying, ‘ Come ! ’ ”

is much more widely known as a composer of popular music than as a hymn writer. A born musician, it is said that at the age of thirteen he could play a tune on as many instruments as he was years old. He was born at Sheffield, Mass., on August 30th, 1820. When yet in his teens he went to Boston to study music, where he associated with the celebrated Dr. Lowell Mason, composer of the music to “ My faith looks up to Thee,” and in a comparatively short time reached the top of his profession. Dr. Root was a voluminous writer and was contemporaneous with W. B. Bradbury in writing Sunday School music. While he wrote much for the people, as indicated in the character of his hymns, he was a musician honourably recognised by the profession, and was given the degree of Doctor of Music in 1873 by the Chicago University. Previous to devoting his musical talents to the writing of hymns, Dr. Root was everywhere recognised as America’s foremost writer of war songs. The majority of these which gained popularity during the Civil War, and which in later years were adapted by other nations, were his composition. Dr. Root was a man of singularly gracious and engaging personality, and of spiritual convictions, aiming always to inspire others with high ideals both in character and art. His sacred songs, many of which are to be found in almost all present-day Gospel hymn books, have lifted and strengthened the fallen the world over. Dr. Root died on August 6th, 1895, and at his request nothing was sung at his funeral but the Doxology. Amongst his best known compositions are, “ When He cometh,” “ Ring the bells of Heaven,” “ Knocking, knocking.” He also

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wrote words and music of "Altogether lovely," "Why do you wait?" "Narrow and strait," "Behold the Bridegroom Cometh," and that miracle pen picture :

" She only touched the hem of His garment
As to His side she stole,
Amid the crowd that gathered around Him ;
And straightway she was whole.
Oh, touch the hem of His garment,"
Etc., etc.

Edgar Page Stites, the writer of the popular hymn, "Beulah Land," was for many years a prominent business man in Cape May, New Jersey. His pen name of "Edgar Page" has hidden for well nigh half a century, the real authorship of many a song that has voiced the religious enthusiasm of countless thousands. "It was in the year 1876 that I wrote 'Beulah Land,'" said Mr. Stites in a letter written after he had passed three score years and ten, "I could write only two verses and the chorus when I was overcome, and fell on my face. I could only weep and write no more. That was on Sunday. A week later I wrote the third and fourth verses, and again I was so influenced by emotion that I could only pray and weep. The first time it was sung was at the regular Monday morning meeting of Methodist ministers at Arch Street, Philadelphia, when Bishop McCabe sang it to the assembled ministers. Since then its story is known wherever religious people congregate."

"Beulah Land" is a song brimful of new found joy. Here is the chorus :

" O Beulah Land, sweet Beulah Land,
As on thy highest mount I stand,
I look away across the sea,
Where mansions are prepared for me,
And view the shining glory shore ;
My heaven, my home for evermore."

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During some correspondence in 1913, Mr. Stites sent me a favourite verse of "Beulah Land" in his own handwriting, which I am able to have reproduced here.

*The Saviour comes and walks with me
And sweet communion here we have
He gently leads me with his hand
For this is heaven's border land*



Edgar P. Stites

He was then seventy-six years of age, over six feet tall, and straight as an arrow. Remarkable, too, was the fact that the eyes with which he "looked away across the sea," had never needed glasses. At that advanced age he could see to read without them.

Edgar P. Stites is also the author of :

" Simply trusting every day,
Trusting through a stormy way."

A hymn which has been translated into about a dozen different languages, and was perhaps a greater favourite a generation ago than it is to-day, is the one beginning :

" Yield not to temptation,
For yielding is sin."

Horatio R. Palmer, the writer of this hymn, was born at Sherburne, N.T., on April 26th, 1834, and is the

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author of several standard works on music. Referring to this hymn a friend of Mr. Palmer writes: "I travelled in Palestine with the author of the words and music of 'Yield not to temptation.' He told me that when he was thinking of the temptation around the young, the idea of the hymn flashed upon him. The first two verses came to him without any effort, but the third verse cost him some trouble."

The hymn was written in 1868, and first published in the *National Sunday School Teachers' Magazine*. When the famous prison at Sing Sing, New York, had women as well as men within its walls, a lady missionary was a regular visitor to the women's department. Every Sunday afternoon the prisoners were permitted to come into the corridor to hear her talk, and to join in the singing of hymns. One day some of the women rebelled against an order of the matron, and a scene of grave disorder followed. Screams, threats and profanity filled the air. Assistance was hastily summoned, when suddenly a voice rose clear and strong above the tumult, singing a favourite song of the prisoners :

" Yield not to temptation,
For yielding is sin ;
Each victory will help you
Some other to win.
Fight manfully onward,
Dark passions subdue ;
Look ever to Jesus,
He'll carry you through."

There was a lull ; then one after the other joined in the singing of the sacred song ; and presently, with one accord, all formed into line and marched quietly to their cells.

Besides composing music for a large number of popular Gospel hymns, including that appropriately

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appealing tune to "Come sinner, come," H. R. Palmer is the writer of words and music of several other familiar sacred songs, the best known being, "Shall I let Him in?" and "There is a home eternal."

Although belonging to another school of American hymn writers to that at present under consideration, this chapter would not be complete without the inclusion of the author of one of the most beautiful hymns in the language. I refer to :

" My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Saviour Divine ;
Now hear me while I pray ;
Take all my guilt away ;
O let me from this day
Be wholly Thine."

Dr. Ray Palmer, the writer of this hymn, was born at Rhode Island in 1809. "My faith looks up to Thee," was written when the authour was just twenty-two years old, and was his first composition. Remarkable though it may seem, this initial performance in hymnody was by far his most successful, for though Dr. Palmer is the author of many other hymns, not one of them has attained the popularity enjoyed by his first production. To-day, after well nigh a century it is to be found in the hymnals of almost all denominations. The author says, concerning its composition : "I gave form to what I felt by writing, with little effort, these stanzas. I recollect I wrote them with very tender emotion, and ended the last line with tears." Some time afterwards, Dr. Lowell Mason, meeting Mr. Palmer in Boston, asked him for a contribution for a new hymn book he was preparing, whereupon he produced this hymn from his pocket book. Dr. Mason was so much impressed with it that he at once wrote for it the famous tune "Olivet," to which it has since been sung. When

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next he met the author, Dr. Mason said to him : " Mr. Palmer, you may live many years and do many good things, but I think you will be best known to posterity as the author of " My faith looks up to Thee."

On the evening preceding one of the most terrible battles of the American Civil War, a number of Christian young men met together in one of their tents for prayer. After spending some time committing themselves to God, it was suggested by one of the number that they should draw up a prayer expressive of the feelings with which they went forward to stand face to face with death, and all to sign it as a testimony to the friends of such of them who might fall in the impending battle. After consultation it was decided that a copy of " My faith looks up to Thee " should be written out, and that each should subscribe his name to it, so that father, mother, brother or sister might know in what spirit they laid down their lives. They did not all meet again, and this incident was related afterwards, by one who survived the great battle. The last verse is most beautiful and affecting, especially when this touching incident is recalled :

" When ends life's transient dream—
When death's cold sullen stream
Shall o'er me roll—
Blest Saviour, then in love,
Fear and distrust remove ;
Oh, bear me safe above—
A ransomed soul."

Possibly the next best known of Ray Palmer's hymns is, " Jesus, Thou joy of loving hearts." He died at New Jersey in 1887.

Referring to Sankey's popular *Songs and Solos*, a hymnal editor of note writes : " It should be frankly recognised that whatever be our estimate of the literary value of the hymns, or the musical merits of the tunes

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with which they are associated, they have obtained such general acceptance amongst the masses that it is almost impossible to dispense with them in mission work. Probably it is their unpretentious simplicity that constitutes their charm, and accounts for their extraordinary popularity, while it provokes the criticism of those who set art before utility."

And thus, looking back to the early days when Philip Phillips set out on his pilgrimage of song, we see, with the march of time, a great and wonderful development in hymnody ; a development which has vastly improved and enriched the hymnody of the Church. Hymns have been written that will be sung until time shall be no more.

CHAPTER X.

Sacred Song Composers

eloquent tribute deserves to be paid to the various composers who contributed in no small measure to the immense popularity and usefulness of Gospel song. As has already been observed, Luther, more than three centuries before, was one of the first to fully realise the great truth that the tune was of equal importance with the words. As a matter of fact, with him the tune was first, the words second. But though Luther did not scruple in some degree, to do violence to the language to fit it to the exigencies of the music, yet he had a good notion of what a hymn tune should be, for his doctrine would have fallen comparatively flat had not his hymns given wings to his teaching.

“The merits of a hymn,” once said the late Lord Balfour, “lie chiefly in the tune and associations, so that the editor of a hymn book who divorced old words from their accustomed setting, is an iconoclast of the worst order.” Most of us will agree that there is a great deal of truth and common sense in this statement. Constantly in touch with hymns new and old one cannot but observe the variety of tunes, appropriate and otherwise, which find a place in our hymn books. There are, for instance, the words of some of our very old hymns which are inseparably wedded for all time to their own particular tune. Link on another tune and the beauty of the piece is gone. An old precentor in one of our remote Scottish kirks was of the same

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opinion after a disastrous attempt at a “new” tune. He had held the post of leader of praise in the kirk for fully fifty years, and for well nigh fifty-two times fifty he had led the singing of the 100th Psalm to the Old Hundredth tune. One Sunday, having had occasion to be absent from the kirk, Andra was greatly concerned about how the service would be carried through without him. Soon after, meeting one of the elders—who by the way, boasted of no small knowledge of music—the precentor enquired how they had got on at the kirk. “Oh,” replied the elder, with a touch of conscious pride, “we got on fine; mon, we had a new tune to the 100th Psalm.” “Oh, and what was’t?” Andra asked; at which the elder struck up the words of the familiar Psalm to the tune of the old Scottish song, “Ye Banks and Braes o’ Bonnie Doon.”

“Ay, mon,” thoughtfully responded the old precentor, “I never thocht o’ that.”

Andra determined not to be behind. On the following Sunday he was in his accustomed place, and when the 100th Psalm was announced from the pulpit, there was no uncertain sound in the old precentor’s voice as he feelingly struck up the Psalm to the new tune :

“ All people that on earth do dwell,
How can ye bloom——! ”

It is not recorded how far the worthy precentor was led astray in his enthusiasm for the old familiar song tune, before he discovered his mistake. There is undoubtedly a danger in more ways than one by clashing a new tune with an old hymn. On the other hand, many an excellent hymn has found a premature grave because of an inappropriate tune.

About the middle of the nineteenth century we find in America a group of composers, many of outstanding ability, collaborating in the self imposed

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task of introducing what might at that period be considered a new type of sacred music. Up to that particular time there had been, to a great extent, a lamentable lack of charm in the hymn and psalm tune in general use, and so they set out to give to the world something more musically effective. Thus was brought into being the now popular sacred song.

Possibly the earliest composer in this particular sphere of music was William B. Bradbury, an American celebrity. He has been affectionately referred to as the father of sacred song. Born in 1816, musical impulses came to him when working on a farm as a boy, and he made a journey to Boston, where, for the first time, he heard an organ. He is credited with being the originator of Sunday School music, which has had such an influence upon the life of the Church during the last half century and more. He was also the pioneer in publishing this class of music books, and was among the first to promote musical conventions in America, which in later years became so popular in bringing together many of the leading hymn writers, whose names are so familiar to-day. Mr. Bradbury's love for music and young people made these occasions very popular and helpful. Amongst his many musical compositions are, "He leadeth me," "Solid rock," "I love to think of the heavenly land," "Sweet hour of prayer," "Jesus loves me," and "The Golden Shore."

Composers of sacred song were drawn from various walks in life. John R. Sweny, the composer of the music of "More about Jesus," "Beulah Land" and "Sunshine in my soul," which have been translated into many languages, has written over one thousand sacred songs. He was born in West Chester, Pa., in 1837. His first composition was produced when he was yet a boy, and at the age of twenty-two he held a

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responsible position as teacher in the musical profession. During the American Civil War he entered the army as leader of a military band, which position he held until the government discontinued the use of military bands in the army. On his retiring from the service he was made Professor of Music at the Pennsylvania Military Academy. It was in 1871, about the time of the great spiritual awakening when Gospel song was yet in its infancy, that Mr. Sweney turned his attention to writing sacred music, and during the remainder of his life devoted his talents to the production of hymns. It is said that he was the editor or associate editor of over sixty hymn books. Mr. Sweney's music has the stamp of originality and what he contributed to the cause to which he was so closely devoted, ranks with the best writers of his day. He was a popular leader at conventions and camp meetings ; and his love for the young led Mr. Sweney to associate himself with one of the largest Sunday Schools in Philadelphia, where for ten years he led the singing. He passed away on April 10th, 1899.

The name of Dr. W. H. Doane will always be associated with Fanny Crosby. He was a great friend of the blind hymn writer and wrote the music of many of her best known hymns. Dr. Doane was born at Preston, Conn., in 1831, and, though educated for the musical profession, he followed the occupation of a manufacturer of wood-turning machinery, and had taken out more than eighty patents for his inventions. The writing of hymn tunes was, therefore, an employment of his leisure. Another of his hobbies was the collection of quaint musical instruments, a number of which he presented several years ago to the Cincinnati Art Museum. Dr. Doane was superintendent of a large Sunday School at Cincinnati, Ohio, and edited no less than thirty-five collections of hymns and tunes

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for Sunday School use, besides composing several cantatas and anthems. Among his musical compositions that came into general use in the churches, were a number that were found to be well adapted for evangelistic use, and were, therefore, incorporated in books issued for that purpose, the very mention of which will call to mind the best known and best loved hymns for evangelistic and devotional purposes. For instance, the following : "Safe in the arms of Jesus," "Rescue the perishing," "Jesus, keep me near the cross," "Pass me not, O gentle Saviour," "Tell me the old, old story," "I am Thine, O Lord," and "Saviour, more than life to me."

Though keenly devoted to music and writing, which amounted to well-nigh a life work, he did not allow it to interfere in any way with his making a large and successful business, and with his giving a great deal of thought and practical help to missionary and philanthropic work. Dr. Doane received the degree of Doctor of Music by the Dennison University, an honour he well deserved, for he served the cause of sacred song with conspicuous ability. He died at his home in Orange, N.J., on December 23rd, 1915, in his eighty-first year.

Possibly the most famous hymn tune composed by George C. Stebbins is the one written to Fanny Crosby's hymn, "Saved by grace." Amongst others by the same composer are "Jesus is tenderly calling," "Take time to be holy," "Ye must be born again." Mr. Stebbins was born in New York State in 1846, from whence he moved in 1869 to Chicago. It was here he began his life-long acquaintance with Messrs. Moody and Sankey. It is not generally known that more evangelists, both singer and preacher, rose to religious fame from Chicago, than from any other city or country. Among such were Moody, Sankey, Bliss, Whittle,

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McGranahan, Case, Excell, Gabriel and Stebbins. In 1876 Mr. Stebbins engaged in evangelistic work with Mr. Moody, and was more or less associated with him for a long period, going three times abroad and twice to the Pacific coast to assist him. It was during his visit to Great Britain when assisting Moody and Sankey in the memorable campaign of 1883-85 that Mr. Stebbins composed the tunes of many of his popular hymns, including, "Jesus is tenderly calling." In his reminiscences, which appeared in *The Gospel Choir* some years ago, Mr. Stebbins graphically describes the great mission conducted in London, ably assisted by many of the leading people in the religious world of that time, including the Earl of Shaftesbury, Lord Kinnaird, and Sir George Williams, founder of the Young Men's Christian Association. Describing the closing days of the winter's mission, Mr. Stebbins explained that it was Mr. Moody's custom to have an all day's meeting at each of the various centres. "I remember," he writes, "at one of these meetings an incident occurred that caused a good deal of amusement. Messrs. Moody and Sankey, Major Whittle and Mr. McGranahan, Dr. Pentecost and myself had lunched with some friends, and on the way to the afternoon meeting, where Major Whittle and Dr. Pentecost were to speak, a remark was made to the latter, illustrating one of Mr. Moody's habits of speech that amused him, and which found a lodgment in his mind. When it came his turn to speak, Mr. Moody whispered to him, saying, "Pentecost, be short; be short." He began his address by saying, "Mr. Moody has asked me to be short. I notice that he will have three quarters of an hour of enthusiastic singing, and then he will get up and speak for half an hour, but it is not every one who can do that; but any one who can pronounce Jerusalem in two syllables

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can do most anything." The remark caused a good deal of laughter by the congregation, and considerable notice by the Press of England. Spurgeon's comment upon the incident, or rather upon Mr. Moody's pronunciation of the word, was not only characteristic of the great preacher, but very happy and appropriate. He said, "I thank God there is one man in such hot haste to get the Gospel to the people that he does not stop to pronounce all the syllables of every word."

Extending over a long period, Mr. Stebbins was an intimate friend of Fanny Crosby, and composed the music for a considerable number of her hymns. He was also joint editor with Messrs. Sankey and McGranahan in the production of a large number of hymn books to which he contributed many beautiful Gospel hymns. Speaking at a reception given in his honour at Chicago, when he was in his seventy-seventh year, Mr. Stebbins gives this beautiful testimony, eminently characteristic of him :

"One of the things for which I thank God is that I was diverted from my profession to sing the Gospel, and for having something of the gift for writing music. It has been the greatest privilege of my life to be in the work and of using the gift God has given me, in producing the hymns you have sung."

In response to my request, Mr. Stebbins kindly wrote me a few bars of one of his favourite hymns. "I take pleasure in enclosing a brace of 'In the secret of His presence,'" he wrote, "but do not wish to imply, by so doing, that it is my favourite, for I have never been able to satisfy my mind in that regard. Each hymn taken as a whole, both words and music, has its own individuality, its appeal and sphere of service, as you can well understand; and indeed, its own claim to that distinction. However, considering the rather unique place this hymn has occupied, the sentiment in

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the words, their authorship, their setting and all, it is perhaps as worthy to be called a favourite as any hymn that bears my name."

Geo. Stebbins.

The words of this beautiful hymn are by Ellen Lakshmi Goreh, a Mahratta Brahmin lady, and the hymn coming into the hands of Mr. Stebbins, he composed the music to which it has since been sung. It may be of interest to remark that it had its first introduction to the public in London, during the all-winter's mission already referred to, conducted by Moody and Sankey in 1883-84. Mr. Sankey sang it from the original manuscript, and Mr. Stebbins himself sang it as a solo in the latter part of that mission.

Mr. Stebbins, who is now in his eighty-sixth year, is spending the evening of a long and useful life at Brooklyn, New York.

William J. Kirkpatrick is another composer of a large number of popular Gospel hymn tunes which made their first appearance in Sankey's early collections. He was born in Ireland in 1838, and when he was yet a child his parents emigrated to America and settled in Pennsylvania, in which State his life was spent. He came of a musical family, and at an early age was quite proficient on the flute, fife, violin and 'cello.



ROBERT LOWRY.

GEOGE C. STEBBINS.

PHILIP PHILLIPS.

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For a few years he worked as a carpenter and for some time during the Civil War he served as principal musician, fife major of the ninety-first regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers. He was returned to Philadelphia and was assigned to work as a ship-builder until near the close of the war. During the twelve years that followed, Mr. Kirkpatrick was connected with a furniture manufacturing company, but in 1878 he abandoned all commercial pursuits and gave his undivided attention to the writing of sacred music, gradually gaining the ear and admiration of the English-speaking world.

Mr. Kirkpatrick was a voluminous writer, and it would be difficult to place an estimate on what has been attained in the Lord's vineyard by his thousands of compositions. As editor his name has been associated with over one hundred different collections of sacred music. Among the compositions that have made his name famous are the following well-known favourites : "Jesus saves," "Wait and murmur not," "He hideth my soul," " 'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus," and "When love shines in." Possibly his best known hymn, of which he is the writer of both words and music, is the one beginning :

" I've wandered far away from God :
Now I'm coming home ;
The paths of sin too long I've trod ;
Lord, I'm coming home.

Coming home, coming home, never more to roam ;
By Thy grace I will be Thine ; Lord, I'm coming home."

Mr. Kirkpatrick laid down his pen on September 29th, 1921, and passed into the presence of the King at the advanced age of eighty-three, while resting in his favourite chair. On the floor, at his feet, lay a slip of

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paper on one side of which was written with lead pencil, scarcely legible, the following lines :

“ Just as Thou wilt, Lord, this is my cry :
Just as Thou wilt, to live or to die.
I am Thy servant ; Thou knowest best :
Just as Thou wilt, Lord, labour or rest.”

A second stanza was written on the reverse side of the slip of paper in still more indistinct writing :

“ Just as Thou wilt, Lord,—which shall it be,
Life everlasting waiting for me,
Or shall I tarry here at Thy feet ?
Just as Thou wilt, Lord, whate'er is meet.”

In a private letter to a friend of the writer, Mr. George C. Stebbins says, in writing of the passing of Mr. Kirkpatrick : “ To voice such words of resignation, then to close his eyes and open them again in a moment’s time, is as striking and impressive as it is beautiful. What an awakening he must have had ! Well might every child of God covet such an ending of his life.”

As a composer of music for evangelistic purposes, Dr. D. B. Towner, who wrote the tune to “ Trust and obey,” occupies a prominent position among writers, as his hymns will amply testify.

In the year 1885, Dr. Towner felt the call of God to enter His service and he gave himself wholly to evangelistic work. Some years later Mr. Moody arranged that he should become the director of the musical department of what has since become known as the “ Moody Bible Institute ” in Chicago, which was then in its infancy. From that time until he was called home, Dr. Towner carried on an important work, and through his teaching and personal contact with the students that have passed through the institution, he has impressed himself upon thousands of young men and women, who have gone from there, more or less

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imbued with the spirit of consecration, he had ever manifested, and with the increased knowledge of the importance which music has in all kinds of Christian activities.

Dr. Towner, like the other singers who were more or less under Mr. Moody's direction, occasionally assisted him in some of his meetings when Mr. Sankey was not with him, but he was usually associated with some of the evangelists whose movements Mr. Moody had at his disposal. It is said that his voice has been heard in almost every State in the Union.

Dr. Towner was born in Pennsylvania in 1850, and passed away in his seventieth year.

Other familiar compositions of his are : " Anywhere with Jesus," " Full surrender," " Redeemed," " Saving grace," and " Grace is greater than our sin." His songs are still widely used in evangelistic work and his name is familiar to all who sing or love Gospel music.

The unparalleled distinction attained by Ira D. Sankey in the realm of Gospel song is world-wide, and it seems superfluous to write in this connection at any great length. His famous *Sacred Songs and Solos*, is his monument. And yet, writing on this absorbing subject, one feels it incumbent to make more than a passing reference of one whose name is still a bright luminary in the sphere of Gospel hymnody. He was born in the village of Edinburgh in Western Pennsylvania on August 28th, 1840. At the age of sixteen he was converted while attending revival meetings, and at once associated himself with Sunday School work, in connection with which, at an early age, he was elected superintendent and leader of the choir. It was here that Mr. Sankey's voice began to attract attention, and before long the Sunday School overflowed with people who came to hear the singing. In this way, though unconsciously, he was making

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preparation for the work in which he was to spend his life. It was in 1870, at a convention held at Indianapolis that Mr. Sankey first met Mr. Moody, where the latter was announced to lead a morning prayer-meeting at seven o'clock. Arriving rather late, Sankey took a seat near the door alongside one of the delegates, a Presbyterian minister, who immediately turned to him and whispered, "Mr. Sankey, the singing here has been wretched ; I wish you would start up something when that man stops praying, if he ever does." Sankey promised to do so, and when the opportunity came he struck up the familiar hymn, "There is a fountain filled with blood." The congregation joined in heartily and a brighter aspect seemed to pervade the whole atmosphere. At the close of the meeting, Moody immediately sought out the singer. Of that memorable meeting, which was willed of God to have such far-reaching effects, even to the carrying of the glorious Gospel to the ends of the earth, I will let Sankey tell his own story : "Moody's first words to me, after my introduction, were, 'Where are you from ? Are you married ? What is your business ? ' Upon telling him that I lived in Pennsylvania, was married and had two children, and was in Government employ, he said in his characteristic manner, ' You will have to give that up. '

"I stood amazed, at a loss to understand why the man should tell me that I would have to give up what I considered a good position. 'What for ? ' I exclaimed.

" 'To come to Chicago and help me in my work,' was the answer. When I told him that I could not leave my business, he retorted, ' You must ; I have been looking for you for the last eight years. ' "

Sankey promised to think the matter over, and would seek the Lord's guidance. The next day he received a card from Mr. Moody asking him to meet the evangelist at a certain street corner that evening, at six

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o'clock. At the appointed hour Sankey was at the meeting place with some friends. In a few minutes Moody came along, but without stopping to speak he passed on into a store near by, and asked permission to use a large box. The permission being granted, he trundled the box into the street, and calling Sankey aside, asked him to get up on the box and sing something. Sankey climbed up and sang, "Am I a soldier of the Cross?" which soon gathered a considerable crowd. After the song, Mr. Moody got up and began to speak. The workmen were just going home from the factories and in a short time there was an open-air service of huge dimensions. The people stood spell-bound as the words fell from Moody's lips, with wonderful force and rapidity. When he had spoken some time, he announced that the meeting would be continued in the Opera House. He asked Sankey to lead the way and sing some familiar hymns. This he did, and marched along the street singing, "Shall we gather at the river?" The crowd immediately followed. That night the Opera House was packed to the doors, so completely were the men carried away with the singing and the sermon from the store-box. Thus did Ira D. Sankey hear in no uncertain voice God's call to service; nor did he longer wait, but from that moment consecrated his life to the Lord. From that time on till the death of Mr. Moody in 1899, they were associated in their great life work of saving souls. The wonderful results of that world-wide service of song, which to-day is still making itself felt, will only be revealed in a coming day.

In 1873 Mr. Sankey sailed for England with Mr. Moody. The story of that great mission, when there swept a mighty wave of revival from shore to shore of the British Isles, has often been told and will remain indelibly imprinted in letters of gold on the pages of

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history, so long as the Gospel in song and story is told forth.

It is a remarkable circumstance that before Mr. Sankey entered upon his career as an evangelist he had never attempted to write music suited to evangelistic work, but soon after his work with Mr. Moody assumed such proportions in 1873, he began this phase of his work which from that time forward gave him a place among the foremost writers of Gospel song. His first attempt to write a hymn tune was during their mission in Edinburgh, when the music he then wrote was his admirable setting to Dr. Horatius Bonar's beautiful hymn, " Yet there is room." Mr. Sankey's second composition was his music to the well-known hymn, " I'm praying for you," which has proved to be one of the most useful hymns in all the range of evangelistic hymnody, and which has been blessed to uncounted multitudes. His subsequent work as a composer along that line brought him into prominence as a writer of music of a devotional character that possesses strength and permanent value, and which undoubtedly places Ira D. Sankey among the most gifted writers of evangelistic and devotional music. Among his best known compositions which to-day are being used in many parts of the world, the following may be mentioned: " The ninety and nine," " Hiding in Thee," " Simply trusting," " There'll be no dark valley," " A shelter in the time of storm," and " When the mists have rolled away."

But the one hymn which will always be associated with Mr. Sankey is " The ninety and nine." I have a vivid recollection, which I shall always cherish, of hearing Sankey, in his own inimitable way, sing this inspiring song. It was during his last visit to this country in the winter of 1898-99, where he conducted services of " Sacred Song and Story." In describing

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the origin of the hymn Mr. Sankey related that he and Mr. Moody were travelling from Glasgow to Edinburgh during their Scottish mission, when he chanced to see the words of the hymn, which appeared in the poet's corner of a newspaper he was reading. So impressed was he that he called Mr. Moody's attention to the little poem, suggesting that it would make a useful hymn for evangelistic work. Having cut the verses out and placed them in his musical scrap-book, Sankey put it away in his pocket, and for the time the poem was forgotten. At the noon meeting held at the Free Assembly Hall, Edinburgh, on the second day, the subject presented was "The Good Shepherd." It was an impressive address, and at the close, Mr. Moody turned to his colleague and asked him to sing a solo in keeping with the subject. Mr. Sankey had nothing suitable in his mind, and was greatly troubled to know what to do. But I will let Sankey tell his own story, as I heard him relate it. "At this moment," he said, "I seemed to hear a voice saying: 'Sing the hymn you found in the train!'" But I thought this impossible, as no music had ever been written for that hymn. Again the impression came strongly upon me that I must sing the beautiful and appropriate words I had found the day before, and placing the little newspaper slip on the organ in front of me, I lifted my heart in prayer, asking God to help me so to sing that the people might hear and understand. Laying my hands upon the organ I struck the chord of A flat, and began to sing.

"Note by note the tune was given, which has not been changed from that day to this. As the singing ceased, a great sigh seemed to go up from the meeting, and I knew that the song had reached the hearts of my Scottish audience. Mr. Moody was greatly moved. Leaving the pulpit, he came over to where I was seated.

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Leaning over the organ, he looked at the little newspaper slip from which the song had been sung, and with tears in his eyes said: 'Sankey, where did you get that hymn? I never heard the like of it in my life.' I was also moved to tears and arose and replied: 'Mr. Moody, that's the hymn I read to you yesterday on the train, which you did not hear.' Then Mr. Moody raised his hand and pronounced the benediction, and the meeting was closed. Thus 'The ninety and nine' was born."

In the art of singing, Mr. Sankey possessed gifts of an extraordinary character, although he had no professional training previously. Having a high baritone voice of exceptional volume, purity and sympathy, he had quite unconsciously acquired the habit of correct tone production, which enabled him to preserve it uninjured to the end of a strenuous career. Sankey's interpretation of his sacred songs was his own conception; and in his rendering of them he ever kept before him the importance of clearly emphasising the subject of the hymn, even to the risk of doing violence to the accepted rules of musical phrasing. But the singer's heart was in the song, and he sang his messages to the hearts and consciences of the people with sincerity of soul, that made him, under God, the great evangel of song that he was.

A story, reminiscent of the sweet singer's visit to Great Britain, is worthy of relating here. One day Sankey drove out from London to Epping Forest. A shock-headed boy climbed up one of the wheels of the carriage, and with wondering and longing eyes gazed on the stranger. Sankey rested his hand lovingly on the lad, and expressed the hope that some day he would preach the Gospel. Years afterwards, when the sweet singer was old and frail and blind, and just before he entered the Homeland, the evangelist was

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almost overcome with joy when Gipsy Smith told him that he was the boy in the glades of Epping Forest on whose curly head Sankey had laid his prophetic hand.

The strenuous work connected with his last mission in Great Britain proved too much for his strength, and he never recovered from the strain. A few years before his death a decline in health set in, which was followed by total blindness.

Of the sweet singer's closing days I will set down what has been written by his constant friend and fellow-composer, Mr. George C. Stebbins: "During the last two years of Mr. Sankey's life I visited him every few days when in the city, and had delightful times of talking over experiences in the past with him. In spite of his total blindness he was ever the same cordial and companionable friend he had always been. His humour would often manifest itself in recalling some amusing experiences in the past, laughing as he told them, and apparently enjoying them to the full as he lived them over again.

" But it was plain to be seen that his mind and heart had long been set on his home-going, for that subject would so often intrude itself in our conversations. Once he said to me, ' George, you will find me on Spurgeon Street, when you get up there.' And for well nigh a year before his going, every time I called upon him he would say before my leaving, ' George, I want you to be at the church next Sunday (the church known as Dr. Cuyler's, of which he had been a member for a good many years) for I'll be there, as I am going home.'

" He had so longed for the two last years to be ' absent from the body and present with the Lord,' that his passing on had become an obsession with him.

" The time so longed for came on the 14th of August, 1908. I was at the time at Northfield con-

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ducting the singing at the annual conference there, which he and I had done yearly from the beginning of the conferences in 1880, but I was 'at the church' when he was taken there to receive the last marks of affection and love from his host of friends, and looked for the last time upon the face of the great singer who had gone to join the choir of the Redeemed on High."

The services Ira D. Sankey rendered the cause of Christianity cannot be fully estimated; services which even after the passing of well nigh half a century are a blessing and inspiration to untold millions the world over—truly a monument more enduring than granite.

Among the composers of Gospel song tunes to be found in present-day hymn books, the name of E. O. Excell is frequently met with. Possibly his best known compositions are, "Count your blessings," and "Let Him in." Born in Stark County, Ohio, in 1851, he served an apprenticeship to the trade of bricklayer and plasterer, but when twenty-two years of age, the love of music drew him away from his humble calling, and he finally laid aside the trowel and hammer for the more congenial occupations to be found in the many avenues of music. He was always keenly interested in Sunday School work, an evidence of which makes itself known in his many compositions for children, notably the two favourite songs, "Jesus bids us shine," and "Jesus wants me for a sunbeam," which are included in almost every recently published hymn book for young folk.

Mr. Excell was the last one of the old line of singing evangelists, and laboured with many of the most famous evangelists from the early days of D. L. Moody up to the time of his death. His was a life of devotion in the service of the Master, and for twenty years he was the colleague of the Rev. Sam P. Jones, the

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celebrated American evangelist. As a singer, Mr. Excell had few equals. Possessing a voice of remarkable sweetness and power, he was able to sway his audience with the earnestness and spirit of his expression. His last work was with Gipsy Smith, in Louisville, Kentucky, in the midst of which he was obliged to quit his labour and return home. His voice was heard for the last time in the chapel of the Wesley Hospital, Chicago, on Sunday afternoon, January 16th, 1921, where, sitting in a wheel-chair, he sang as a solo "It is Jesus," with wonderful effect. At the close of the service his old friend and fellow-composer, Charles H. Gabriel, sang with him, "Beautiful Isle of Some-where." No longer to him is that land a vague "some-where," for, a few months later, his barque sighted the haven of rest, and as the sun went down on the evening of June 10th he landed upon that heavenly shore.

A recognised authority on all matters pertaining to sacred music, Mr. Excell, in his day, edited over forty different hymn books, besides having written many Gospel songs that will be loved and sung by many generations to come. He has also written the words of a considerable number of popular hymns, including, "Scatter sunshine," "Grace enough for me," and "I'm happy in Him."

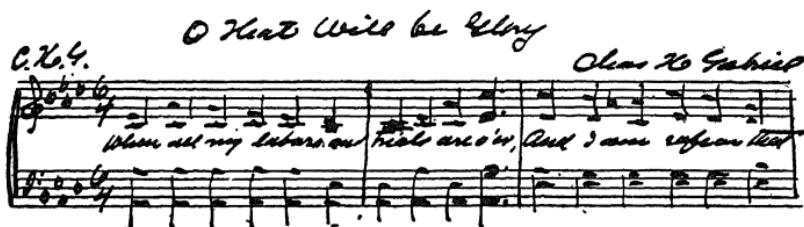
Perhaps no person in the history of Gospel song has attained the position occupied to-day by Charles H. Gabriel. A native of the State of Iowa, where he was born in 1856, Mr. Gabriel has been privileged to have personal acquaintance with many, if not all the noted hymn writers, from the days of Philip Phillips, P. P. Bliss, and others, to the present time; and is thus the last living link of an illustrious group of sweet singers in the world of American hymnody. Commonly known as the "King of hymn writers," Mr. Gabriel has written the words or music of more popular hymns

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than has any other person living to-day. His most famous hymn, of course, is "The glory song," which has been translated into almost every leading language of the world, and which has probably been printed more than a hundred million times. It has been said that no Gospel song in history ever attained the international popularity of "The glory song" in so short a time. It was written in 1900, and in less than five years it was sung around the world.

O Heart Will be Glory

C. H. G. *Clear to Gabriel*



This hymn alone is enough to make Mr. Gabriel famous; but he has written a number of others almost as famous. Among these are: "Send the Light," "Calling the prodigal," "He is so precious to me," "Where the gates swing outward never," "To the harvest field away," "Awakening chorus," "He lifted me," "Sweeter every day," "Evening prayer," and others equally well known.

In all of those the words of which he was the author, there is very manifest a happy blending of the poet and musician, and along with it rare judgment and deep spiritual insight into the needs of presenting the saving truths of Scripture in clear and singable form. His work in both fields is worthy to be recognized as an ideal to be followed by writers of to-day who desire sympathetic and appropriate musical settings to hymns.

He has also written the music for many of the most popular hymns of recent date, including: "Higher

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ground," "The Way of the Cross leads home," "Let the sunshine in," "Hail Immanuel," "The sparrow song," "A Sinner made whole," "Brighten the corner," "Glory in my Soul," as well as many others to be found in almost every evangelical hymn book in present use.

Scores of hymns have passed through his hands for final retouching, polishing and finishing. He is supposed to know better than any other living person just how to put the finishing touches to a hymn. At an early age he began teaching singing schools in his own State, and later on, his remarkable musical abilities made him a popular leader of song in the great religious conventions all over America.

Mr. Gabriel is a self-made man, and although he has reached the very pinnacle of his profession, he never received a single music lesson in his life. Untaught, he taught himself, because there were no teachers of music on the wild prairies, where his father's cabin stood and where the boy spent his early years.

He was born in a little shanty built of boards, and plastered both inside and outside. It stood on the virgin plains of Iowa. There was not a tree or shrub to shelter it from the terrific storms and snows of winter, or shield it from the blazing suns of summer. The wagon roads were trails over the rolling prairies. Deer, wolves, and prairie chickens were plentiful. Few settlers had horses, ox-teams being mostly used.

By the time Charles Gabriel was five years of age, a schoolhouse had been built three-quarters of a mile west of his home, where boys and girls received instruction during the winter months when there was no work to do on the farms. The benches used were made of logs, split in half, with two legs at each end inserted in auger holes. They were too high for little feet to touch the floor, nor had they a support for the

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back, and more than once, in a sleepy moment, some young hopeful turned turtle over that hard, hard seat.

“I never saw a musical instrument,” he writes, “until I was about nine years old, and to this day I couldn’t tell the name of that one, as nothing like it has ever come under my observation since. For use it was placed upon a table, as a dulcimer. It had bellows which the performer pumped with his left elbow, while, with the fingers of both hands, he played keys something like those of a concertina. The next musical instrument I saw was a melodeon of that day and style. I rode ten miles to see and hear it, and no music since then has sounded to me more divine. I heard it as I ploughed in the field ; it sang in my ears as I did my “chores” * ; in my dreams it floated over the hills of weariness down into the valley of rest, where I lay asleep.”

His experiences as a teacher of music in the early days were of a unique and varied character. In the winter of 1882 we find him teaching a class composed entirely of coloured people ; the following year he is in Texas, his pupils being cowboys, who attend the practices carrying their lariats and “guns” with them ; while over in Muskogee his singing class consisted largely of Indian girls, who were usually accompanied by adult Indians in all their beaded and blanketed originality. He also taught a class of Japanese in San Francisco.

Mr. Gabriel is a man of simple tastes, is a great lover of the common people, and he is especially fond of children. His great aim in hymn and music writing is to produce simple, direct words and music, which can be felt and sung by the masses. Like all other great composers he is fond of classic music, but he judiciously

* Odd jobs about the farm.

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avoids all technicalities in writing his hymn tunes. This is perhaps one great secret of his success as a hymn writer.

It was his inviolable rule to write something every day, and his work, covering as it did so wide a field, made the task comparatively easy. Still the proverbial midnight oil burned very frequently into the small hours, for his work was always done at home, and at night time when all the world about him slept.

For a period extending over twenty years it has been the present writer's inestimable privilege to have had an intimate acquaintance with the eminent hymn writer, and although he is now beyond the allotted span of three score years and ten, his letters are still brimful of joyous youth, for his soul is full of music, and his heart still throbs with love for the Master. Mr. Gabriel has now retired from active business life, mostly spent in the city of Chicago, where the greater number of his hymns have been written, and with his devoted wife, is now spending the evening of his days on the Western shores of America, in a pretty little bungalow at Berkley in California. But though the e'ntide shadows of a long and useful life may be gathering on the near horizon, yet his pen is never idle not his harp silent ; for Mr. Gabriel is still writing hymns and hopes to continue to do so till called home to join in the grand eternal song.

“ My sixty years of Gospel song,” he writes, “ have been eventful and tolerant, interesting and tedious, hopeful and discouraging. Failure more often than success marks the path I have travelled. And now, since the years have led me up the eastern slope and over the mountain top of life, and I am hurrying down toward the silent sea that lies shimmering before me, I begin to realise that my work has not been so much a failure as I had concluded, for seldom do I appear on

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the platform that I do not meet some one I have met or known in the years gone by ; and to feel a substantial slap on the shoulder and to hear a voice as from out of the past say : ‘Hello ! old man ; glad to see you once more,’ is like a benediction, while to clasp the hand of a friend and feel that pressure which proves itself genuine is worth more than all the gold that was ever mined.”

The theme of his famous “ Glory Song,” written thirty years ago, is to-day more precious to its author than ever before, and were we permitted to listen to the outpouring of a heart full of joyful song, I doubt not we would catch the strains of the same glorious anticipation :

“ When all my labours and trials are o’er,
And I am safe on the beautiful shore,
Just to be near the dear Lord I adore,
Will through the ages be glory for me.

Oh, that will be glory for me,
Glory for me, Glory for me,
When by His grace I shall look on His face,
That will be glory, be glory for me ! ”

CHAPTER XI.

Popular Writers of To-day

SINCE the advent of Sankey's *Sacred Songs and Solos*, there have been many imitators in this particular sphere of hymn production, but few, if any, have approached anything near the high water mark of popularity this initial experiment attained. Inspired by the overwhelming success of the American singer's venture in the production and development of sacred songs, others have launched out on similar lines, until to-day the number of Gospel song books is legion. Considering the world-wide publicity given to the Sankey hymns, it is only to be expected that a great number will live to be used and blessed of God for time to come. Still, with each passing generation, new writers are born, whose productions in some measure are supplanting many of the old favourites whose day and generation is past. The purpose of this chapter is to refer briefly to those writers—nearly all of whom are still living—whose hymns have attained no small measure of popularity, and are familiar to the hymn lover of the present generation.

It is worthy of note that by far the greater number of popular Gospel songs in use to-day have their origin in America, possibly because of the immense quantity of sacred song books published annually, thus giving unlimited scope to contributors of this particular type of hymn.

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One of the newer songs which sprang into favour soon after leaving the pen of the author, begins :

“ When upon life’s billows you are tempest tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.”

Like a beam of sunshine it sped forth, brightening the dark places of the earth, bringing joy and gladness to the heart wherever it was sung. The author is the Rev. Johnson Oatman, jr., a Wesleyan minister, whose hymns, to-day, will be better remembered than his sermons. He was born in America, in 1856, and is said to have written about two thousand hymns, his first being, “ I am walking with my Saviour.” Other well-known hymns by the same writer, are : “ I’m depending on the Blood,” “ I know He is mine ” and “ There’s no Friend like Jesus.” Possibly his most popular song—a song which has carried his name to many lands—is : “ There’s not a Friend like the lowly Jesus, No, not one ! No, not one ! ” In less than a year it was reprinted in thirty-five different hymn books, and has since been translated into many languages and dialects.

Among recent writers of sacred song, few names are more familiar than that of Mrs. C. H. Morris, many of whose hymns rank with the compositions of Fanny Crosby and Frances Ridley Havergal. She is the composer of the words and music of :

“ Nearer, still nearer, close to Thy heart,
Draw me, my Saviour, so precious Thou art ;
Fold me, O fold me close to Thy breast,
Shelter me safe in that ‘ Haven of Rest.’ ”

Born at Ohio, in 1862, Mrs. Morris was converted at the age of ten. Since the day of her new birth it

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has been her one aim to consecrate her life to the service of the Lord, believing at the beginning of her career that if she would write a noble poem, she must first live a noble life. Mrs. Morris is not only a poetess, but she is also a gifted musician, and the music of many of her best known hymns are her own composition. Over nine hundred of her pieces have been published, a good number of which have found a place in many present-day mission hymn books, including : "Let Jesus come into your heart," "The fight is on," "Who is this Man of Sorrows?" and "The Stranger of Galilee."

In the prime of life Mrs. Morris became totally blind, but this affliction does not deter her from exercising the ministry of song with which she is endowed, the writing being done by dictation to her daughter.

In the remote hamlet of Westwood, about a dozen miles from the city of Boston, a young Baptist minister, while conducting open-air evangelistic services in the village square, was inspired to write a Gospel song, which has been one of the favourites of the last two generations, and has been used of God in saving many a lost soul. The story of how this hymn "Throw out the Life-line," came to be written, is worthy of recounting here. The Rev. Edward S. Ufford was pastor of the old village church, in the parsonage of which he penned this hymn. Out at sea, not many miles distant, could be seen at low water the remains of an old wreck embedded in the sand. "As I trod the shore on summer days," wrote Mr. Ufford, when telling the story, "my imagination strove to picture what the storm did on the fatal night when it tossed the craft ashore, where it was soon dashed to pieces in the gale. While my heart was thus yearning for an effective interposition, a thought came to me. 'Why not hold an open-air meeting in the village next Sunday afternoon, and warn all who might pass by of their danger?' This was

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in the fall of 1886. I carried my small organ out into the square and began to sing. There soon gathered around me a group of listeners. On returning home, the imagery of the sea came before me. In my mental eye I could see a storm, a spar, a shipwrecked sailor drifting out beyond human reach, where he might sink. Taking a sheet of paper I wrote the four verses of the hymn in fifteen minutes. They came as if by inspiration. Then sitting down to my little instrument, I played a melody without mental effort, apparently, and so the song was born."

" Throw out the Life-line across the dark wave,
There is a brother whom some one should save ;
Somebody's brother ! Oh, who then will dare
To throw out the Life-line, his peril to share ? "

Mr. Ufford came of a musical family, his father and grandfather having been choir leaders in various cities. He was born at Newark, N.J., in 1851, was converted to Christ in young manhood, and at once began to work for the Master. A life of D. L. Moody which he read with deep interest, was the means of inspiring him to devote his life to the ministry of the Gospel. The popularity of " Throw out the Life-line," which had spread over the country on the wings of enthusiasm, fitting into the Christian Endeavour and missionary movements, gave the author the idea of a tour around the world to sing the song and to follow in its wake. This he undertook in 1902, and found that " Throw out the Life-line " proved to be a passport wherever he went. In Honolulu, it was in the native hymn book there in the Hawaiian dialect, and the author had the unique experience of singing his song in the old church, where the congregation sang it back to him in their native tongue. Mr. Ufford was called home in 1930 in his seventy-ninth year.

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Precisely the same year that “ Throw out the Life-line ” was written, Mrs. Jessie Brown Pounds gave us :

“ Anywhere with Jesus I can safely go ;
Anywhere He leads me in this world below ;
Anywhere without Him dearest joys would fade ;
Anywhere with Jesus I am not afraid.”

Set to music by Dr. Towner, it was popular first as a Sunday School hymn, and afterwards became a favourite with the Christian Endeavour movement. A band of Endeavourers were in the habit of singing on Sunday afternoons at the Sing Sing Penitentiary, and, incongruous though it may seem, this hymn was a favourite with the prisoners. Among the latter there were two young men who had been sentenced to death for a murder committed by them in a house they had entered for the purpose of burglary. Under the ministry of the Christian young people who visited them, they were converted. On their last day on earth, when they were brought forth for execution, the condemned men made a public confession of their sin, saying, however, that though they merited the death they were about to suffer, they believed they had God’s forgiveness, and that through His grace they could go “ Anywhere with Jesus.”

Mrs. Pounds was born at Hiram, a suburb of Cleveland, Ohio, August 31st, 1861, and began to write to various weeklies when she was fifteen years old. A few years later, an editor who published some of her verses, referred to them as being well adapted to use as hymns. This note caught the eye of Mr. J. H. Fillmore, a hymnal editor, who wrote the authoress asking her to write some hymns for a new book upon which he was working. In this way Jessie Brown Pounds began hymn writing. She is the authoress of several books of hymns. Among her best known are : “ The way

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of the Cross leads home," "Scatter seeds of loving deeds," "I know that my Redeemer liveth," "The touch of His hand in mine," and "Beautiful Isle of Somewhere." The latter hymn, which was sung at President McKinley's funeral, was written one Sunday morning, in 1897, when a slight ailment kept Mrs. Pounds from church.

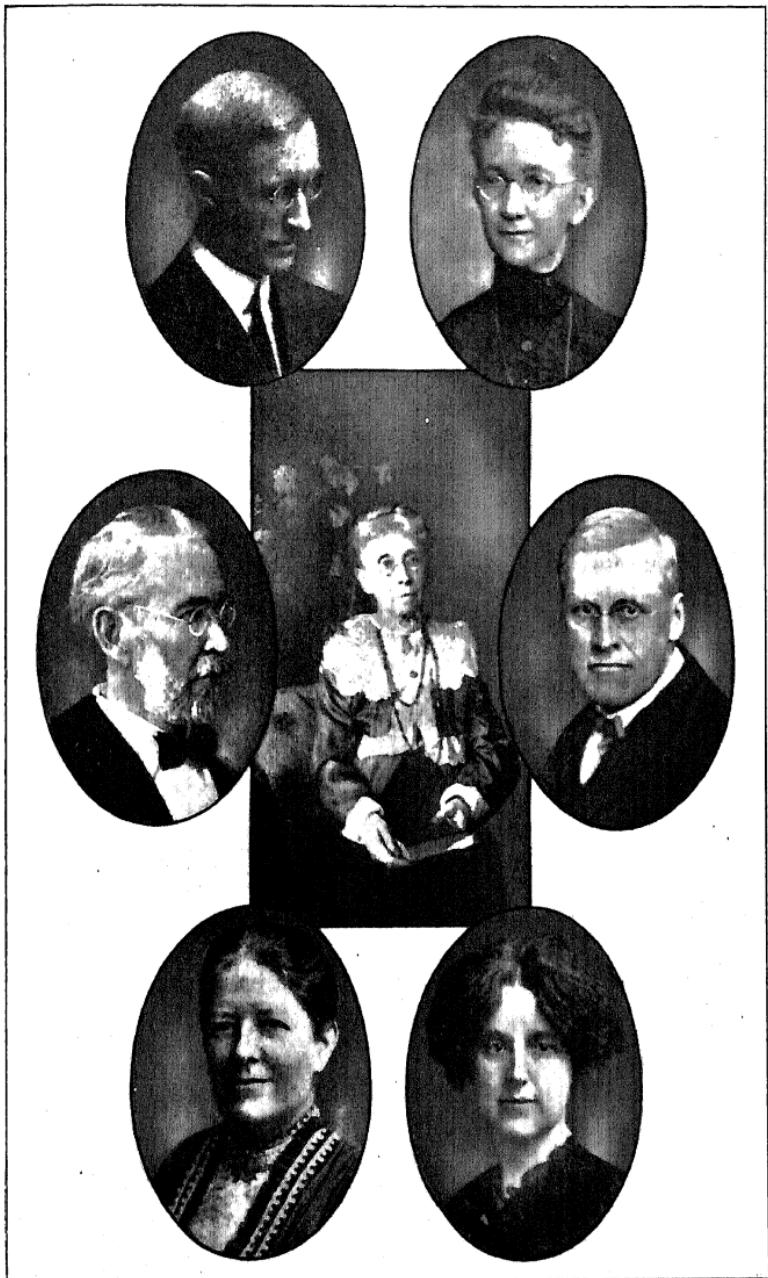
Miss Eliza Edmunds Hewitt, the authoress of "Sunshine in my soul," ranks among the foremost writers of popular Gospel songs in recent times. Born at Philadelphia, U.S.A., in 1851, in early life she developed a spinal malady, which caused her to be a shut-in sufferer for many years. In course of time a gradual improvement came about, and, during a slow convalescence, she began writing poems which attracted the attention of John R. Sweeney, the noted composer of sacred music.

Miss Hewitt's hymns are the result of inspiration, the origin of which, to her, is often a mystery; she has never cared to keep a record, but their number has long since passed into thousands. "Sunshine in my soul," has been sung far and near, many beautiful stories coming back to the authoress, telling of its wonderful use, and the happiness brought into many a weary heart.

Other favourite hymns by E. E. Hewitt are: "Sweeter as the days go by," "No one like my Saviour," "Will there be any stars," "More about Jesus," and "When we all get to Heaven," a hymn of joyous anticipation :

"Sing the wondrous love of Jesus,
Sing His mercy and His grace;
In the mansions, bright and blessed,
He'll prepare for us a place."

One day, when passing down one of the poorer



R. H. DANIEL.
JOHNSON OATMAN, JNR.
ADA R. HABERSHON.

JESSIE BROWN POUNDS.
J. W. VAN DE VENTER.
ANNIE SHERWOOD HAWKS.
INA DUDLEY OGDON.

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streets of his native town of Williamsport, Mr. James H. Black saw a little girl sitting on a doorstep of a dilapidated house. Her ragged clothes, torn shoes and dejected appearance, told its own story of a drunken father and mother, and a dwelling unworthy of the name of home. He spoke to the girl and asked her if she would like to come to Sunday School. At the question, a wistful expression crept into the child's eyes as she softly answered, "Yes, I would like to go, but—" Mr. Black understood the longing in the heart of the ragged girl, and the following day a parcel arrived containing a new dress, shoes and hat. Bessie was at Sunday School the next Sunday, and many other Sundays. One day the roll was being called. Each one responded until Bessie's name was being called. There was no response. Again the name was called. Still there was no response. Mr. Black learned that the girl was ill, too ill to be present, and the thought came to him like a flash, "What if this girl should never answer again? What if she should die? What would her answer be when the final summons came?" Almost unconsciously he found himself saying, softly:

"When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound, and time shall
be no more,

When the morning breaks eternal bright and fair;
When the saved of earth shall gather over on the other
shore,

And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there."

No sooner had he said the words than his trained ear told him that he had created something euphonious, and going to the piano, he struck off the music almost as spontaneously as he had the words. In a remarkably short time he had finished the hymn which has been changed very little, if any, since that night.

The little girl died shortly afterwards, but the hymn which her illness inspired will never die. It has been

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sung round the world, and has been translated into half a dozen foreign tongues. Writing about this time, Charles H. Gabriel says, "While assisting Dr. J. F. Berry in the preparation of a collection of songs, he took from his desk a roll of manuscript which had been submitted for use in the book, and handed it to me, saying, 'See if you can find anything in this bunch.' One from that lot (written in green ink) attracted my attention. The composer's name was not familiar to me, and the title of his offering was a new thought: 'When the Roll is called up yonder.' " Thus the hymn was sent out to carry its message over land and sea.

Mr. J. M. Black is also the author of a small but popular collection of songs, entitled *Songs of the Soul*, which was favourably received, over half a million copies being sold. He also composed the music of "Where Jesus is 'tis Heaven," and "I remember Calvary," and wrote the words of "Safe in the Glory Land."

Mrs. Frank A. Breck has written fourteen or fifteen hundred hymns, and one of the best loved is :

" Face to face with Christ my Saviour,
Face to face—what will it be,
When with rapture I behold Him,
Jesus Christ who died for me ? "

Brought up by God-fearing parents, she cannot remember when Bible reading and prayer were not her daily home custom. From the days of her youth Carrie E. Breck wrote verse and prose for religious and household publications. For a number of years after her marriage, in 1884, family duties superseded those literary, and only on rare occasions did she encourage the muse. Her first published hymn was "You ought to do something for Jesus." Writing of this memorable occasion, when new desires for this particular form of service filled her soul, Mrs. Breck says, "It

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was a great joy to me, and as opportunity offered, I pencilled verse under all sorts of conditions—over a mending basket, with a baby in arms, and sometimes even when sweeping up or washing dishes, my mind moved to metre."

Some of her best known hymns are "Everybody should know," "Nailed to the Cross," "Help somebody to-day," and "Never give up trusting."

Among popular Gospel songs of the last decade which suddenly sprang into favour, is "I walk with the King." Homer Rodeheaver, the singing evangelist, whose voice has been heard in most of the States of America, relates an incident in connection with this song, which happened during a mission he was conducting. "I sang this song to a great crowd of coloured folks one night," he says, "and as I finished it, one of the good old-fashioned aunties got up from the back row, taking off her sun-bonnet, waving it in the air, and stepping high down the aisle, she exclaimed, 'Hallelujah ! I walk wid Him too, brudder ! ' Then there came the chorus from all over the house, ' Yeah ! we all walk wid Him down here ! ' This," continues Mr. Rodeheaver, "is the real purpose of the song, to get folk to walk with Him."

Here is the verse that seemed to stir her enthusiasm :

" O soul near despair in the lowlands of strife,
Look up and let Jesus come into your life ;
The joy of salvation to you He would bring—
Come into the sunlight and walk with the King."

This song is from the versatile pen of James Rowe, who is said to have upwards of eight thousand hymns and poems to his credit. Born in England, in 1866, at an early age he entered the Government Survey Department, where he continued till 1890, when he

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emigrated to America. Mr. Rowe began writing hymns and poems about six years later, his first song being " Speak it for the Saviour."

A hymn by the same writer, which has gained considerable favour of recent years in this country, and is a special favourite of Gipsy Smith, has this chorus :

" Be like Jesus, this my song,
In the home and in the throng ;
Be like Jesus, all day long !
I would be like Jesus."

Many of the best songs of Mr. Rowe owe much of their popularity to the attractive musical settings of Mr. B. D. Ackley.

Few composers of recent years have attained the position among Gospel song writers occupied to-day by Mr. Ackley, whose first composition, " Somebody knows," was published in 1912. It became a favourite, and was soon followed by many popular pieces, among others, " I shall dwell for ever there," " How you will love Him," and " I am coming Home." For ten years Mr. Ackley held the position of organist in many important churches of New York and Philadelphia, and for a considerable period was pianist to the Rev. W. A. Sunday, the noted American evangelist.

Miss Ada Blenkhorn, the authoress of " Let the sunshine in," and many other familiar pieces, began writing hymns in 1892. Of this hymn, a prison chaplain said, " It has done our prisoners more good than all the sermons preached to them." Another said, " ' Let the sunshine in ' brought the first ray of light to a condemned criminal, who was converted, afterwards pardoned, and who has for several years been preaching the Gospel." Some years ago Miss Blenkhorn had almost decided to give up hymn writing, when one day a lady, whom she happened to meet,

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said to her, " May some soul be converted through a hymn that you shall write, who would not be converted if you do not write it ! " " Those beautiful and inspiring words," writes Miss Blenkhorn, " seemed an invisible and mighty chain that held me fast and would not let me give up."

It was during the Torrey-Alexander mission that the consecration song, " I surrender all," first came into favour in this country, and singularly enough it was the first hymn of the author, J. W. Van de Venter, to become popular. He has written over a hundred hymns, and a fair percentage of them, prominent among which are " Looking this way," " Sunlight," and " My mother's prayer," have found a place in present-day mission hymn books, and have been wonderfully blessed.

The eminent Dr. T. De Witt Talmage, in the course of one of his striking sermons related this story : A mother having lost her only child, sat in a darkened room, day after day, grieving for the little one the Reaper had bound with his sheaves, when the servant entered and said, " My dear Mistress, why do you grieve ? Do not sit in the darkness—let's open the window and look toward the light." It was by reading this story, that Ina Dudley Ogden received the inspiration to write her first hymn, " Open wide the windows," which was set to music by Charles H. Gabriel. This was followed by a great number, which to-day are known and loved the world over. Among the many are, " Living where the healing waters flow," " Could I tell it," " Carry your cross with a smile," " Jesus will," and " Brighten the corner where you are."

Of this authoress, Mr. Gabriel, who has furnished me with so much information relating to present-day hymn writers with whom he has been constantly in touch, writes : " Mrs. Ogden has always been an

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intense lover of Gospel songs, and their influence on her early life was the controlling incentive that gave to the world that which only she could give. The object of every song seems to have been the winning of souls. Loved by thousands who have sung her hymns, she shrinks from celebrity in the knowledge that her songs are God-given, and that without Him she could do nothing, that in this way He has chosen to use her in the work of His vineyard."

Dr. D. B. Towner, who wrote the tune to "Trust and obey," relates how this popular hymn came into being. Mr. Sankey, assisted by Dr. Towner, was conducting evangelistic meetings at Brockton, Mass. One night a young man rose in a testimony meeting and said, "I am not quite sure—but I am going to trust and obey." Dr. Towner jotted down the sentence, and sent it with the little story to the Rev. J. H. Sammis, a Presbyterian minister, suggesting it would be suitable for a hymn. Soon after the verses came back by post, and the tune came spontaneously. Since then :

"Trust and obey,
For there's no other way,
To be happy in Jesus,
But to trust and obey,"

has been sung from continent to continent.

Mr. Sammis found the Saviour when quite a young man, and for many years took an active part in Christian work. He afterwards gave up business to take over the duties of Y.M.C.A. secretary, which later led him to devote himself entirely to the ministry of the Gospel.

Mr. Sammis has written over a hundred hymns. Among this number special mention deserves to be made of "Jesus is a friend of mine," and "Glory all the way," which have gained considerable favour. It is, however, as the author of "Trust and obey," that the name of J. H. Sammis will always be associated.

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One of the newest songs, whose melody like a mighty wave has swept across the Atlantic, and to-day is sung at almost every mission service, is R. H. Daniel's "Since Jesus came into my heart." Mr. Daniel has written comparatively few hymns, and is to-day known to the world by a single composition, which, undoubtedly, owes much of its immense popularity to the bright and attractive melody set to it by Gabriel.

At the close of a big mission, many hundreds of people gathered to bid the missioner good-bye. A great number of these people had been converted during the campaign, and as they lifted their voices in song they changed the words of the hymn to "Since Jesus came into my home." The scene was memorable, and as the joyous note of praise arose from the assembled throng of people, the noise of traffic for some moments was silenced by the mighty wave of song :

"Floods of joy o'er my soul
Like the sea billows roll,
Since Jesus came into my heart."

CHAPTER XII.

Hymns That Have Helped

WANDERERS across the wilderness of life have told how they have been helped and cheered, at one time or another, by some almost forgotten hymn, which has been to them a well of refreshing, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Such remarkable incidents are indeed worthy of recounting, testifying as they do, to the experience of the deeper matters of the soul.

How the singing of “Saviour, breathe an evening blessing,” not only helped but stimulated confidence, was told by one who passed through the night of peril. During the Boxer outbreak in China, when many of the Lord’s servants were cruelly put to death, a company of beleaguered missionaries gathered together at the close of a day through which they had lived in constant fear lest they should have to suffer the fate of so many of their fellow labourers. Separated from home and friends, facing death in a far off land, and full of tenderest feelings, they lifted up their hearts in song :

“ Though destruction walk around us,
Though the arrows past us fly ;
Angel guards from Thee surround us :
We are safe if Thou art nigh.”

“ Out of the storm,” writes Miss Helen Knox Strain, one of the missionaries present that night, “ each soul, renewing its strength, mounted up with wings as eagles and found peace in the secret of His presence. We

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went through the hymn until we came to the last verse, 'Should swift death this night o'ertake us.' We stopped at that line, and thought we would rest in the promise that the angel of the Lord would protect us. And so it proved."

In humble life, our hymns are not without their beams of sunshine. Passing through a narrow alley one day, the attention of a mission worker was attracted by a woman's voice in cheerful song. The words of the refrain upon which she lingered seemed strangely out of place in such squalid surroundings. She sang :

" And I shall see Him face to face,
And tell the story, ' Saved by grace ! ' "

Looking toward the place from whence the song came, he saw a poor old woman, down on her knees, scrubbing the doorstep of her humble dwelling. In a moment, that sweet song took a depth and beauty of meaning, and a charm unimagined before. That poor old woman, in her weary toil, was a "daughter of the King," and heir of eternal glory, though for a short time away from her heavenly home. What she sang, while she scrubbed, was to her a glorious anticipation, and the sunshine of her soul burst forth in the song of her heart.

"I will gladly take my turn in testifying," once wrote the late Mr. W. T. Stead, "conscious though I am that the hymn which helped me most can lay no claim to pre-eminent merit as poetry. It is Newton's hymn which begins, ' Begone unbelief.' I can remember my mother singing it when I was a tiny boy, barely able to see over the book-ledge in the minister's pew ; and to this day, whenever I am in doleful dumps and the stars in their courses appear to be fighting against me, that one doggerel verse comes back clear as a blackbird's note through the morning mist :

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“ His love, in time past,
Forbids me to think
He'll leave me at last
In trouble to sink ;
Each sweet Ebenezer
I have in review,
Confirms His good pleasure
To help me quite through.”

The rhyme is bad enough, no doubt ; the logic may or may not be rational ; but the verse as it is, with all its shortcomings, has been as a lifebuoy, keeping my head above the waves when the sea raged and was tempestuous, and when all else failed.” It was John Newton, the converted slave dealer, who wrote these lines away back about the middle of the eighteenth century.

It is rarely that a circumstance, so remarkable as the following, attends the casual recital of a hymn, for, though it brought the desired joy and consolation to the heart of one individual, it had somewhat the reverse effect on the conscience of another. In the old coaching days, a lady was seated on the outside of a stage-coach reading. During the journey she had been intently engaged over one particular page of a little book which she consulted from time to time, with evident enjoyment. Turning to her fellow passenger, a gentleman, who she perceived was well acquainted with the subject of religion, she held the open page towards him, and pointing to the hymn she had been reading, asked his opinion of it. He glanced at the first few lines :

“ Come, Thou Fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace :
Streams of mercy never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.”

He read no further, and turning away, waived the subject, endeavouring to direct the lady's attention to

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some other topic. She, however, ventured another appeal, describing the great benefits she had derived from the hymn, and expressing her strong admiration of its sentiments. At length, overcome beyond the power of controlling his feelings, the stranger burst into tears. "Madam," he said, "I am the poor unhappy man who wrote that hymn many years ago, and I would give a thousands worlds, if I had them, to enjoy the feelings I then had." The stranger was none other than Robert Robinson, who, sad to relate, had fallen on evil days.

Born in 1735 of lowly parents, his widowed mother sent the boy to London to learn the trade of barber. Here he came under the influence of George Whitfield, the eminent preacher, was converted, and began to study for the ministry. At the age of twenty-five he was called to the pastorate of the Baptist Church at Cambridge, where he attained great popularity. In later years he lapsed into careless ways, indulging in frivolous habits. Poor Robinson ran a zigzag course to the end of his days and died suddenly on June 9th, 1790.

From time to time remarkable stories reach me of the wonderful influence one hymn or other has had upon many of the inmates of our large prisons. In contrast to this, one cannot but be amazed at the sheer incongruity exhibited in one particular instance, as shown in the following, which is taken from the annual report of the Howard Association, published a few years ago. Mr. Thomas Holmes contributes an article on Sunday in a London Prison. He makes reference to the vesper hymn sung by prisoners at an afternoon service he was conducting. "There were," he says, "those thousand men, locked, bolted and barred in prison, with strong warders to keep guard over them; there they were on their knees singing a vesper :

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‘Lord, keep us safe this night,
Secure from all our fears,
May angels guard us while we sleep,
Till morning light appears.’

I could have called out—I almost did—‘Locks, bolts and bars will keep you safe, and your warders will watch over you !’ It seems very strange to me,” he continues, “that in many of our prisons the one and only vesper hymn selected for the prisoners to sing should be this one.”

How a hymn, heard at an unexpected moment and under strange circumstances, helped in a marvellous way, was related to me quite recently by an intimate friend of the subject of the story. He was a Christian worker and had recently lost two sons, both fine young men. One died very suddenly, and a short time afterwards the other was seriously injured in a motor accident. The young man was conveyed to hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries. His father stood by the bedside watching the last struggles ere life left that young body, and when all was over he seemed to give way to bitterness of heart and rebellion against God for the great affliction which had come upon him. Leaving the ward, he went into an adjoining room where his wife waited for him. As he entered, his wife, realising their son had passed away, but ignorant as to her husband’s bitter thoughts, said to him, “Mattha, there’s a young fellow doon there in the street whistling ‘Will your anchor hold ?’” The bereaved father broke down at the significant words of his wife, and could only say, “Weel, the storm is very high just now.” And indeed it was. But he afterwards confessed that the strains of that hymn, whistled by a young plumber going to work in the early morning, wafted to the top storey of the Glasgow Royal Infirmary, was the means of overcoming the evil of

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doubt and placing faith in the sure Anchor, Christ Jesus.

Under somewhat similar circumstances, “Art thou weary?” was the means of bringing peace and rest to a burdened soul. A young woman who had formerly been a Roman Catholic, was brought to the knowledge of the Saviour, and became a faithful and consistent Christian. Some time after, she was laid aside with a serious illness, and became very depressed in spirit. On one occasion when she had been left alone for the night, a cloud came over her spirit, the sense of loneliness grew upon her and she seemed forsaken of God. All looked so black that she dreaded the coming of the long lone night. Just then, the silence of the night was broken by the sound of footsteps on the stone flags of the pavement outside. A man, wearing the clogs of the factory worker was coming along. His soul was full of joy. As he approached the house where the sufferer lay awake, he suddenly raised his voice in song :

“ Art thou weary, art thou languid,
Art thou sore distressed?
‘ Come to Me,’ saith One ; ‘ and coming,
Be at rest ! ’ ”

The herald of peace went on his way singing the song of his heart, little dreaming that deep down in the heart of a young woman went the words “Be at rest!” And as she listened to the message of song borne to her in that silent hour of the night, she cast herself upon the Lord. The sun had pierced the dark clouds, peace and rest filled her heart, and she doubted no more.

A touching narrative is related by a worker at the Evangelistic Services held in Glasgow by Major Whittle and Mr. James McGranahan, reminiscent of those stirring days in the early eighties. The hymn which wrought so great an impression, as recorded in the

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following incident, was written by Ellen M. H. Gates. Here is the first verse :

“ Oh, the clangin’ bells of Time !
Night and day they never cease ;
We are wearied with their chime,
For they do not bring us peace ;
And we hush our breath to hear,
And we strain our eyes to see,
If thy shores are drawing near :
Eternity ! Eternity ! ”

The narrator observed in Bethany Hall, one Lord’s Day evening, an old fellow-workman of his. Knowing that he had been a very irreligious man, he determined to call at the workshop to have a word with his old mate. A day to two later when he called upon John, he soon found that something was working in his mind altogether different from the old things. “ Look here,” said John, “ I didna think there was muckle truth in religion, but I’m a wee bit staggered aboot it jist noo ! ”

“ I was glad to see you in the Hall,” said his friend ; “ but tell me what has staggered you.”

“ Weel, ye see, I’ve a sister, ye ken, an’ a wee while ago she was hearing aboot the meetin’s in Bethany Hall. So somehow she an’ her companion—jist like hersel’, but gey fond o’ singin’—gaed to the meetin’. Aweel, when she cam’ hame, she jist put past her things, an’ sat doon by the fire, nae speakin’ a word. Syne, the wife noticed her een were fu’ o’ tears. ‘ What’s the maitter, Aggie ? ’ Nae answer. ‘ Gang tae bed, there’s a guid lass ; ye’ll hae to be up sune the morn.’ The tears cam’ faster. ‘ Oh, Mary, I canna, I canna gang to bed. I’ve been hearin’ a hymn the nicht I’ll niver forget. Oh, I seem to hear the sound o’ bells from somewhere, callin’ “ Eternity ! Eternity ! ” Oh, I’m gaun into ETERNITY ; an’ oh, how dark it is jist noo ! Gang to my bed ! Na ; I’ll gang to my knees.’ An’ so she

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did. The wife tauld me this," continued John, " an I gaed ben awhile, but I only glowered at her. Weel, the next night she gaed again, an' she sune came hame wi' her companion, an' they baith seemed sae glad, sae happy the gither, an' talked aboot 'I am the Door ; by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved.' They declared they had entered in. Anyhow, they were happy. Next nicht the wife gaed tae, an' noo the hale hoose is like a kirk ! I've been gaun, an' I want tae ken mair aboot these things ; so I an' Wullie here, are comin' on Sabbath nicht, an' Aggie an' some mair o' her companions ; an' mither an' me would like tae hear that song Aggie heard."

In his interesting little book on the subject of "Hymns that have helped," the late Mr. Stead gives a remarkable testimony, received from a Scotsman, relating to "Lead, kindly Light." "My spiritual experience has been varied," he writes, "I was baptised in the Roman Catholic church, brought up in the Congregational Independent, and at length I was fascinated by the history, energy, and enthusiasm of the Wesleyans. I was at one time a local preacher in that body with a view to the ministry. But my fervid fit of exaltation was evoked with the dusty facts of life, and smouldered down into a dry indifference. I sought nourishment in secularism and agnosticism, but found none. I was in the slough of despond, at the centre of indifference, with the everlasting NO on my lips, when 'Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,' came to my soul like the voice of angels. Wandering in the wilderness, 'O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent,' Newman's hymn was to me a green oasis, a healing spring, the shadow of a great rock. Through the light and power of God I was led to light and love in Christ in a way I had never before known or experienced."

From the same source we cull a striking testimony

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of the wonderful help and consolation received from an old-fashioned hymn, by a working man. Speaking of his experience, he says he passed through a period of much tribulation, seeking peace and finding none : “ I thought I had done my best, but still that was unsatisfactory. Something always seemed to be kept back ; something that ought to have come out and did not, or rather, perhaps I should say that was not fully understood by the one to whom it was told. I had no doubt of my wish to repent, no doubt of my willingness to make every reparation in my power, but still peace would not come. At last, I took it all straight to Jesus, and the burden rolled away from my heart.” The old-fashioned hymn which brought such consolation is not to be found in many present-day hymnals. It is by Helen H. Willis, and appeared in Sankey’s earlier collections. Here is the first verse :

“ I left it all with Jesus long ago ;
All my sin I brought him and my woe ;
When by faith I saw Him on the tree,
Hear His still small whisper, ‘ ‘Tis for thee.’
From my heart the burden rolled away—
Happy day ! ”

“ Some of my earliest religious awakenings,” once wrote Dr. Pentecost, the celebrated preacher, “ were in connection with the hymns for children that were just beginning to be sung in the Sabbath Schools when I was yet a little boy. I mention one beginning :

‘ I think when I read that sweet story of old,
When Jesus was here among men,
How He called little children as lambs to His fold :
I should like to have been with Him then.’

That little hymn would always quiet me and beget within my heart seriousness and longing. When, as a child, I used to hear or sing it, I would wonder if there

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was any blessing that I might have from Jesus that would correspond to his calling little children to Him, and laying His gentle, loving hands on their heads and blessing them. And in after years, when I had grown to be a young man, away from home, and far from God by wicked works, that little hymn of my childhood would come to my memory ; and more than once I have sung it with choking voice and tearful eye, and with emotions of real penitence in my heart. It is true that these effects were transient, but they were real and mighty ; and I doubt not that God used that child's hymn to keep my heart from becoming perfectly hardened against His 'gentle voice.' "

A friend of the late Mr. Charles M. Alexander happened to find in a magazine a little song entitled, " Tell mother I'll be there," which he posted to the noted Gospel singer, with the suggestion that it might be useful in connection with his evangelistic work. Mr. Alexander pasted it in his scrap-book and carried it around for a year before he found a suitable opportunity of using. One night in Newton, Kansas, Mr. Alexander was called on to sing a solo. " I saw in the audience a great crowd of railway men," said the singer, " and I wondered what would reach those men. With some doubt, I finally decided to try this touching song, and was surprised at the extraordinary result. Many of the men confessed Christ immediately. When the meeting was over, one big burly engineer came up to me and said, ' Mr. Alexander, I promised my mother on her death-bed that I would become a Christian, but instead of that I have been going to the devil faster than ever. Preaching never touched me, but that song did.' I used that song every night," continued Mr. Alexander, " and I've been using it ever since. I have seen as many as a hundred and fifty men at a single meeting rise and confess Christ during the singing of that hymn,

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before the sermon began. It reaches all classes, because everybody has a mother. It has been criticised from a musical and a literary standpoint. I hesitated a long time before I would use the song, 'Tell mother I'll be there.' I have been criticised all over the world for singing it, but you would not criticise it if you knew what it had done, and what letters and testimonies I have received about it."

This song had an interesting origin. When President McKinley was in office, his mother lay dying in Canton, Ohio, several hundred miles away. She sent word that she wanted to see her boy once more before she died. The President chartered a special train, and telegraphed, "Tell mother I'll be there." A Gospel song writer caught up the idea and wrote the song.

How the singing of a Sunday School hymn brought solace to a young Highlander, as he lay dying in a foreign land, was told by a lady who was permitted to visit one of our military hospitals, soon after some wounded soldiers had been brought in. The young fellow had lost a limb, and the doctor said he could not live through the night. As he lay with closed eyes, his lips moved, and the lady, bending over him, the words "Mother, mother," came in a gentle whisper. Dipping her handkerchief in cold water she tenderly bathed his burning brow, and as she did so he caught her hand and kissing it, cried, "Oh, that is good! Thank you, lady, it minds me o' mother." "Can I write to your mother?" she asked. "No," he said, "the surgeon has promised to do that, but, oh, will ye no' sing to me?" For a moment she hesitated. Looking out of the window her eye caught the gleam of a distant stream, and there came to her the thought of that river "the streams of which shall make glad the city of God." and she began to sing softly the hymn, "Shall we gather at the river?" Eager heads were raised to

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listen to the sweet song, while bass and tenor voices, weak and tremulous, joined in the chorus :

“ Yes, we’ll gather at the river,
The beautiful, beautiful river ;
Gather with the saints at the river
That flows by the throne of God.”

When the song was ended, the lady looked into the face of the boy—for he was not yet twenty—and asked, “ Will you be there ? ” “ Yes, I’ll be there, through what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for me,” came the ready reply, as his face suddenly lit up with a smile. Tears gathered in the lady’s eyes as she thought of the mother, in her far-off Scottish home, watching and waiting for tidings of her soldier boy, who was breathing his last in a foreign land. Next day the good lady returned, but she did not find her Scottish laddie, for, ere the bugle sounded the *reveille* he had crossed the river.

Hymns have ever been a comfort and consolation in time of war as well as in days of peace. From the disastrous battlefield of Magersfontein, in the South African War of thirty years ago, there was addressed to me a letter, written by a Highlander who had been dangerously wounded, early in the battle. “ I am thankful to say God has been very good to me,” he wrote. “ The twenty-four hours I lay on the battlefield unattended was the happiest time I ever spent in my life. All the day and night the words of that hymn were floating through my mind :

“ My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine !
For Thee all the pleasures of sin I resign ;
My gracious Redeemer, my Saviour art Thou ;
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ’tis now ! ”

I had neither doubt nor fear. The Lord was verily my Shepherd. His rod and staff comforted me. Christ

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compassed me about ; He eased my pain ; He quenched my thirst ; He appeased my hunger. The devil could not get in edgeways." Outstretched upon the burning veldt, his life's blood slowly ebbing away, the young Highlander's consolation was in Jesus, a theme so beautifully expressed in the words of William R. Featherston, the Canadian boy's little hymn. Facing death during those terrible hours, he was able to sing from his heart :

" I will love Thee in life, I will love Thee in death,
And praise Thee as long as Thou lendest me breath ;
And say when the death-dew lies cold on my brow,
' If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now ! ' "

Fanny Crosby's popular hymn "Rescue the perishing," which has been the battle-cry for the great army of Christian workers throughout the world, has been blessed to thousands of souls. It was very extensively used in the great Moody and Sankey campaigns, during which, abundant testimony to its power to reach the hearts of wanderers was amply demonstrated. Sankey tells a story of how this hymn was the means of bringing peace and happiness to one who had sunk to the lowest depths of degradation. One bitterly cold night, a middle-aged man staggered into a Mission Hall in New York. He was under the influence of drink, his face unwashed and unshaven, and his clothes in rags. He sank into a seat near the door, but was aroused by the hymn which was being sung. The words were strangely familiar, and seemed to have a sobering effect on his dulled senses :

" Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave ;
Weep o'er the erring one, lift up the fallen,
Tell them of Jesus the mighty to save."

As he listened, the hymn seemed to recall some memory of his youth long since forgotten. It went straight

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to his heart. As the preacher told the simple story of the Gospel, and how the Lord had come to seek and to save that which was lost, the stranger listened eagerly. In his younger days, the preacher had been a soldier during the American Civil War, and in the course of his address, mentioned several incidents which had occurred in his military experience, giving the name of the company in which he served. At the close of the meeting the man staggered up to the preacher, and in a broken voice, said :

“ When were you in that company you spoke of ? ”

“ Why, all through the war,” was the reply.

“ Do you remember the battle of — ? ”

“ Perfectly.”

“ Do you remember the name of the captain of your company at that time ? ”

The preacher mentioned the name.

“ You are right ! I am that man. I was your captain. Look at me to-day and see what a wreck I am. Can you save your old captain ? I have lost everything I had in the world through drink, and I don’t know where to go. The hymn you have just sung seems to tell me there is hope, even for a wretch like me.”

He was saved that night, and was soon helped by some of his former friends to get back his old position. He never tired of telling the story of how a soldier saved his captain, and how the hymn “ Rescue the perishing ” was used of God in taking him out of the pit of iniquity, and setting his feet upon redemption ground.

Pathetic, indeed, was the death in America of Dr. John Watson (better known by his pen-name “ Ian Maclaren ”), and appropriate to a degree was his call for the words of the Scottish hymn, “ My ain countrie.” His physician secured a copy of the verses, and the dying preacher and author found consolation by their recitation. This is how the hymn opens :

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“ I am far frae my hame, an’ I’m weary often whiles,
For the lang’d-for hame-bringin’, an’ my Father’s welcome
smiles ;
An’ I’ll ne’er be fu’ content until my e’en do see
The gowden gates o’ heaven, an’ my ain countrie.”

On the last occasion that Sankey visited this country, I heard him sing “ I’m far frae my hame,” and I have still a distinct recollection of how the American singer thrilled the large audience by his remarkable rendering of this beautiful Scottish song. There is a touch of pathos in its origin, but I will let Sankey tell the story in his own words : “ Many years ago John Macduff and his young bride left Scotland on a sailing vessel for America, there to seek his fortune. After tarrying a few weeks in New York they went West, where they were successful in accumulating a good competence. By and by his wife’s health began to fail. The anxious husband said that he feared she was homesick.

“ ‘ John,’ she replied, ‘ I am wearying for my ain country, will ye no’ tak’ me to the sea, that I may see the ships sailing to the homeland once more ? ’

“ Her husband’s heart was moved with compassion. In a few weeks he sold their Western home and took his wife East to a pleasant little cottage by the sea, whose further shores broke on the rocks that line the coast of Scotland. She would often sit and gaze wistfully at the ships sailing from the bay, one after another disappearing below the horizon on their way to her ain countrie. Although she uttered no complaint, it was evident that she was slowly pining away. John was afraid that she would die in a foreign land ; and as an effort to save her he sold his New England home, and took her back across the ocean. She speedily recovered by the keen mountain air, the sight of purple heather, nodding bluebells, and hedge-rows white with fragrant hawthorn blossoms in bonnie Scotland, her

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own dear native land. To her it was home. And there is no sweeter word in any language than 'home.' ”

Mary Lee, when a young woman of twenty-three, wrote “My ain countrie,” after hearing the story of John Macduff and his wife. She was born at Cronton Falls, New York, in 1838. At an early age she lost her mother, and was left in the charge of a Scottish nurse, from whom she learned something of the Scottish dialect. It was a special favourite of Mr. Sankey, and the warmth and zeal with which he rendered it never failed to captivate the good folks north of the Tweed. Possibly it may have been on such an occasion that the words of “My ain countrie” were impressed on the memory of Ian MacLaren, to be recalled years after as he lay dying far from his native land, bringing to him in his last moments, the peace and consolation his weary heart longed after.

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